Aspirations and Capabilities: The Design and Analysis of an Action Research Project in Khayelitsha, Cape Town

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DECLARATION

I, Catharina Maria Conradie, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation entitled *Aspirations and Capabilities: The Design and Analysis of an Action Research Project in Khayelitsha, Cape Town* is my own work and that I have not previously submitted it, in part or in its entirety, at any university for a degree or examination. All sources have been indicated and acknowledged by means of references.

Signature:

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Abstract

The central theme of the study is whether deliberate actions to realise aspirations can and would be likely to increase capabilities amongst the poor, and whether such attempts might reduce poverty. Capabilities are seen here as real opportunity sets which people can use to achieve what they want to be or do (Sen, 1990:43-44). In addition Amartya Sen also emphasises the important role of agency in the achievement of capabilities (Sen, 1985). The relationship between aspirations, agency and capabilities is therefore explored, with emphasis on whether people can escape a potential poverty trap by deliberate and focused use of agency. I also ask what role structural opportunities and constraints play in this process.

The study has been largely inspired by the idea of Arjun Appadurai (2004) that the poor might be constrained in their efforts to escape poverty because they lack the capacity to aspire, as they might have been socialised to accept that their aspirations would not be realisable. This idea was tested in a five year action research programme in Site C, Khayelitsha, near Cape Town. The dissertation offers an analysis of the programme in which a group of women was assisted in voicing their aspirations and subsequently worked on the realisation of these aspirations with a limited amount of support and facilitation by the researcher. Although many papers have been written on the social and economic implications of Appadurai's idea, both within and external to the human development approach, the practical implementation of the idea in a project seems to be novel.

The analysis of aspirations and capabilities is contextualised in the dissertation. The history and migration of the participating women show how their lives have been shaped by colonialism, apartheid, and their own cultural practices. This is followed by a discussion of the literature which informs the research and the analysis. The capability approach is discussed with particular reference to its conceptual tools, and the differences in the approaches of Sen and Nussbaum are briefly described. I review the ways in which capabilities are generally measured, and discuss the perspectives of different authors on individualism in the approach. Adaptation and agency as seen from the perspective of the capability approach provide important conceptual material for the analysis in a later chapter. A number of studies which assessed capabilities by qualitative means are then briefly reviewed, and these again provide background information for the analysis of the Khayelitsha study.

The study on the use of agency in the capability approach reveals that there are lacunae, which could possibly be addressed by amplification from other disciplines. With this in mind agency is further explored in different disciplines – economics, psychology and social theory. Particular attention is given to three classical theorists of agency, Giddens, Bourdieu and Habermas, but the work of Archer, Latour, Long and Joas is also reviewed. I then recommend that the capability approach would benefit from a hermeneutical analysis of agency, and indicate specific elements which I think can be brought forward into such an extension. The literature review also includes a section on aspirations, which takes account of the conceptual relationship between aspirations, agency and capabilities.

The empirical material is introduced under the umbrella of an action research programme which spanned a five year period. As part of this programme there was a household survey to obtain benchmark data. This was followed by the presentation of a life skills course based on Participatory Action Research or PRA methods. Between late 2006 and 2010 the women implemented their decisions, and their actions were observed. The main research process during this phase was an ethno-methodological study of the participating women. During this phase a number of life histories were recorded and I also conducted a set of individual interviews which focussed on individual agency. In 2010 I assessed the women's increase in functionings and capabilities by taking note of actions taken towards achieving their aspirations, and in 2012 I recorded seven interviews on the rural-urban dynamics in their lives. The main findings of the household survey are given in a separate chapter on research findings. The different recordings of the aspirations the women articulated, and how these changed, are also recorded in the chapter on findings.

The analysis of the respondents' increase in functionings and capabilities is done with reference to an adaptation of a diagram published by Robeyns (2005:98), which visualises the essential conceptual parts of the capability approach. I adapt the diagram for a specific social context, for aspiration formulation, for agency assessment, and for the assessment of increased capabilities. In a second analysis chapter I do a hermeneutic agency analysis of six of the participating women in the context of the capability approach, asking whether the pursuit of their aspirations had been agency-unlocking. This is followed by a concluding chapter.
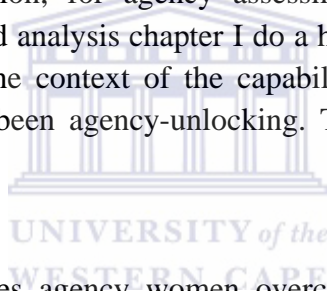
Key words: aspirations, capabilities, agency, women, overcoming poverty, Khayelitsha

This dissertation is dedicated to
Vicky Ntozini, 1973 – 2012,
who was in many ways the inspiration behind the idea to undertake this research

Vicky's life history was recorded by me and Cecilia Costella on April 25th, 2007.

I was born in a remote village in the Eastern Cape. I grew up in a very poor family, headed by my mother. My father worked on the gold mines and because of the influx control laws imposed by the apartheid government, I only saw him on rare occasions. My mother was the pillar of the home and she insisted on sending us to school, although we were some of the first children in the village to go to school. Children normally worked on the farms taking care of the livestock. It was even rarer for girls to have that opportunity. Parents thought that there was no need to send their daughters to school since they would grow up to get married and take care of their children. We did not have money for nice clothes and went to school dressed in rags. In high school I noticed other kids having nice clothes and things I couldn't have. Feeling poor and ashamed, I focused on my studies so that I would one day be able to make a difference to my family.

My mother was a down-to-earth person. Whenever she wanted something she would fight for it until she obtained it. When my elder brother got his matric, my mother took him to the local bank and showed his grades to them and requested a job for him. He got the job and went to work the first month wearing the same and only trousers he had. After that month he got his first payment and could afford to buy clothes for work.

Eventually, my brother moved to Cape Town to be able to work at another branch of the same bank and study at the same time. I followed him and asked him to pay for my studies. I was admitted to the University of Cape Town, an achievement for a black person at that time, as there was a quota system and the university was only allowed a certain number of black students. My high schools marks were very good and I received a good education in the Eastern Cape. In Cape Town I lived in Crossroads and from there I commuted to UCT every day. There, I saw students from all over the world. I remember observing the other students, their lifestyles, clothes and hairstyles and thinking I want to be part of this too.

However, after my second year in electrical engineering, my brother said he could not afford to pay for my school any more. I felt incredibly disappointed. I saw my dream of being the first person in my village to get a degree and the first female to have a degree in electrical engineering disappearing. I applied for a bursary and because of my good results, I was granted an interview. However, when the committee saw that Vicky Bahlman was a black woman, I did not receive the scholarship. I cried and hoped the committee would call me back to say they had made a mistake, but it did not happen.

Many years passed and I felt that I would never achieve what I wanted in life. However, I thought that I didn't want to depend on anybody and that I wanted to be the strong woman I

knew I was. And so I started selling shoes and then clothes, but that never worked. Now living in Khayelitsha and married to Ntzikane Ntozini, I saw how the tourist buses were coming to the townships and looking at us as if we were in a zoo. I thought that if I could get them out of the busses and have them walking around Khayelitsha, it would make a difference. In addition, I love people and talking to them and realised this would be an opportunity for me. And so I started networking with a range of tour operators and bringing people to what I called the 'smallest hotel in the world,' Vicky's Bed and Breakfast. I also had drivers who brought people here, and every day I received numerous tourists at my home for a visit, many of whom came back to stay at the B&B. Ntzikane built first two bedrooms and later four more, with private bathrooms. From then on things started to change rapidly. My hotel is known throughout the world, and I have guests from many countries. My dream is still to get more South Africans! My family helped me to get where I am. My mother is the person who showed me the way. Being a woman has not hindered my opportunities, but has actually helped.

A turning point in my life was to meet the person who is now my husband and to marry him. He is a very focused, stable and grown up man and has been a great support to me. We have been able to accommodate to the age difference very well, but since he is twenty years older than me, he has also been a father figure in a way, guiding and advising me in times of trouble. We have five children, the youngest of which is one year old. The Khayelitsha people have also been very supportive and it would have never been the same without that support.

Believing in God has also been an important thing in my life. Even if you can't see him, you can be grateful that he manages to wake you up each morning. I believe in God and also in the traditional beliefs. However, I think traditions are a problem for the village where I grew up. There, people still wear the traditional clothes every day and live with old rites that can sometimes be harmful. The old people in the village are holding on to the culture and they don't wish to change, even when the younger people who obtained education come back and try to explain the negative aspects of it.

With the help the tourists give me I have started projects for the community and from my own income I support children's education and programmes here and in the village where I grew up.

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Vicky received a number of tourism awards in recognition of her path-breaking work in the tourism industry in Cape Town. She was a peer mentor to the Someleze group and a role model for other women from Site C. Her lively enthusiasm and warm humanity was generally loved and appreciated. In the night of 22 November 2012 she was unexpectedly murdered, which was a great shock to the whole community of Site C. Her husband has been charged with the murder.

Vicky in conversation with Ingrid Robeyns at Vicky's B&B, 2008. Photo taken by Ina Conradie.

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List of Acronyms

ACCEDE	African Centre for Citizenship and Democracy
AIDS	Aquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
ANT	Actor Network Theory
AR	Action Research
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
COSAT	Centre of Science and Technology
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
KDF	Khayelitsha Development Forum
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPO	Not for Profit Organisation
PAR	Participatory Action Research
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SANCO	South African National Civics Organisation
SANPAD	South African Netherlands research Programme for Alternatives in Development
SDT	Self-determination theory
VPUU	Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrade

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Some Xhosa words:

Hluma: to grow
Ighira: traditional healer
Lobola: bridewealth
Mfecane: "The Scattering" or the diffusion of South African people as a result of 19th century military events
Someleze: we strengthen each other
Ubuntu: we are through one another

Above: a map of Khayelitsha with the location of Site C indicated. Below: a map of Cape Town showing the location of Khayelitsha in the south-east of the metropole. These maps are sourced and adapted from the OpenStreetMap (http://www.openstreetmap.org/), © OpenStreetMap contributors, see http://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright.
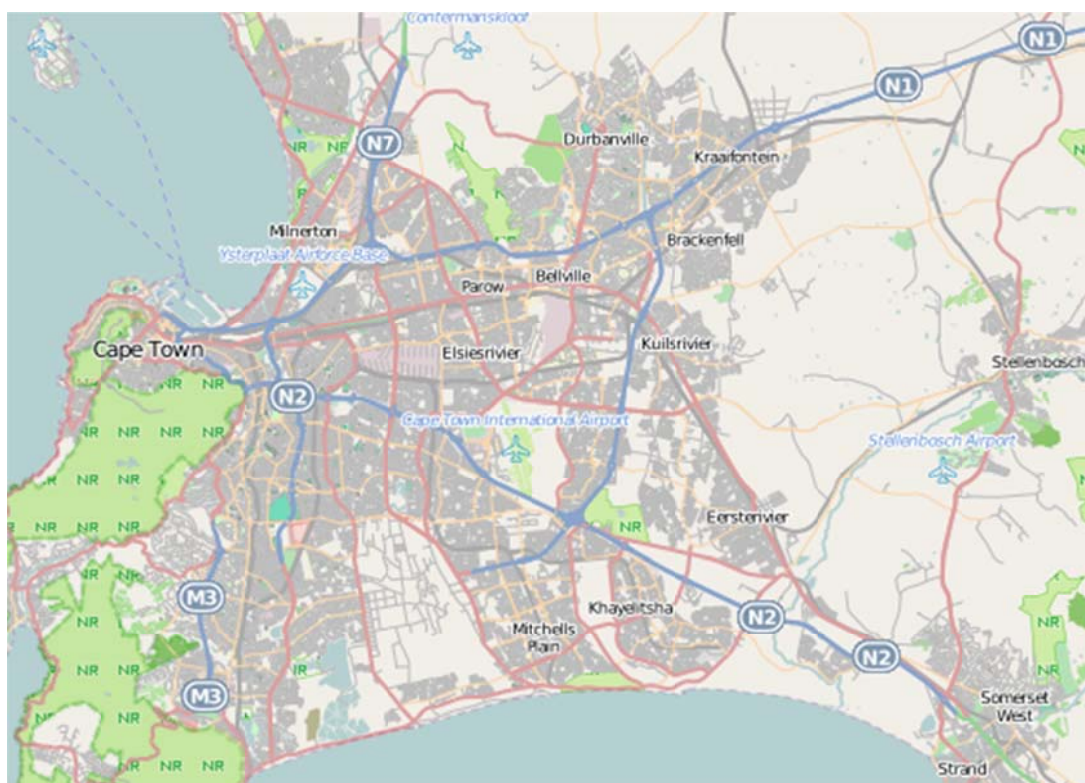
Chapter one
Introduction

1.1 Background and motivation for the study
Poverty has been a key focus area for policy makers and academics since the Second World War, yet it remains a serious problem for most developing countries. South Africa is no exception and the question of how to deal with high levels of poverty and inequality is a pressing one. Poverty assessment is an important theme in this context and South Africa only recently adopted a poverty line.[1] Scholars have been asking what the relationship between a poverty line and upward mobility is, and whether the majority of the poor in South Africa are upwardly mobile or caught in a poverty trap. Evidence suggests that there is indeed a considerable poverty trap (Carter and May, 2001; Adato, Carter and May, 2006).

Within this context, policy analysts are increasingly beginning to ask what difference it might make to poverty reduction to focus on capability enhancement (RSA Planning Commission, 2012). This question will be investigated here, and the relationship between aspirations, agency and capabilities which is examined in this dissertation can possibly advance knowledge on poverty-reduction strategies.

The central question of this study is whether deliberate attempts or actions to realise aspirations can and would be likely to increase capabilities amongst the poor. By this it is meant that a person would have reflected on her aspirations (possibly with some guiding questions set by a facilitator), would have made choices and articulated those as carefully as she is able to, and would have set out to pursue them in a step by step process. Capabilities are seen here as opportunity sets which people can use to achieve what they want to be or do (Sen, 1990:43-44). Sen also emphasises the importance of agency in the achievement of capabilities (Sen, 1985; Crocker and Robeyns, 2010). The interconnectedness of structural opportunities and agency in the realisation of aspirations will therefore be the major theme of the thesis. Agency is seen here as the capacity of a person to act on choices which came about as a result of reflection and judgement, but also on everyday decisions (Sen, 1985; Crocker and Robeyns, 2010; Giddens, 1984:41-45, Kahneman, 2011). Such manifestations of agency are moreover strongly influenced by motivation, autonomy, relatedness and competence (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

In conceptualising the role that aspirations can play in small-scale development interventions, Conradie and Robeyns (2013) propose that they can be *agency-unlocking*. This does not mean that agency is created by aspirations, but that latent agency can be activated or unlocked by reflection on one's aspirations. This proposition will be tested in the analysis of empirical data in this study. If this idea would be supported by the empirical findings, it would provide support for the notion that the poor can do something about poverty, despite

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[1] Statistics SA suggested a poverty line of R431 per person per month in 2006 prices (Statistics South Africa, 2007).

the poverty trap which has been identified in South Africa. Each woman's history, context, personality, will and intentions are shaped and influenced by personal, social and political experiences, to enable (or constrain) her pro-active and personal actions in a collective situation. I shall describe the actions taken by a number of women who attempted to realise their life dreams consciously and deliberately, and the key outcomes of these actions, asking whether these had led to increased capabilities. I shall also explore the use of agency in the capability approach, and in economics, psychology and social theory. This will enable me to make recommendations for ways in which an agency analysis in the capability approach can be extended for the purpose of social analysis by the incorporation of notions of agency from the social sciences.

South Africa is furthermore about twenty years into the post-apartheid period, and the question of how our particular history would influence the process of reconstruction and development can also be asked. An underlying question in this study is thus how poorer South Africans claim and use opportunities after decades of apartheid and centuries of colonialism, and how these oppressive experiences of the past influence their aspirations, and their ability or willingness to act on these aspirations.

1.2 The 'capacity to aspire', investigated within a human development framework
The study has been largely inspired by the idea of Arjun Appadurai (2004) that the poor might be constrained in their efforts to escape poverty because they lack the capacity to aspire, as they might have been socialised to accept that their aspirations would not be realisable. I explored this idea in a five year action research programme[2] in Site C, Khayelitsha, near Cape Town. The thesis will offer an analysis of the programme in which I assisted a group of women in voicing their aspirations and then on working on these aspirations with a limited amount of support and facilitation.[3] The theoretical contribution will consist of a theorisation of the relationship between aspirations, agency and capabilities, illustrated by empirical work done in Khayelitsha. This will be undertaken within the capability approach, a normative framework established by Amartya Sen and also by Martha Nussbaum. The capability approach is used as the theoretical and conceptual base for the human development approach, a development policy paradigm, which will also be explained. Although a number of papers have been written on the social and economic implications of Appadurai's idea, both within and external to the human development approach, the practical implementation of the idea in a project seems to be novel.

The paper by Arjun Appadurai on "The capacity to aspire" and on the impact of this capacity on the poor and their capabilities, has served as a generative theme for research in the field of development economics since its publication (Ray, 2006; Dorward, 2009; Bernard *et al*, 2011; Ibrahim, 2011). Appadurai (2004:60-63) saw this ability as a cultural capacity, and

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[2] The action research process took place between February 2006 and late 2010, when the increase in functionings and capabilities was assessed. One additional set of interviews was conducted in 2012.
[3] This research was funded by SANPAD, the South African Netherlands research Programme on Alternatives in Development, between 2006 and 2009 (Conradie, 2009).

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recommended that it be examined in this context. He also recommended that the capacity to aspire be studied within the framework of capability theory, and suggested a "robust dialogue" between aspirations and capabilities.

The capability approach and the human development approach[4] are being established world-wide as a viable alternative to, or alternative emphasis within, conventional welfare economics, and as a valuable contribution to development theory (Fukuda-Parr and Kumar, 2003). It is seen as a new development framework which acknowledges and encourages the essential nature of the market, but nevertheless has a critical distance from the market ideology. It also emphasises the impact of development on human beings through redistribution. Fukuda-Parr argues that the human development approach is a real alternative to the Neo-Liberal approach, and she calls this the "New York Consensus", as its key points are reflected in many key UN agreements and documents (Fukuda-Parr, 2005:312-314). Sen has presented the capability approach as a specific focus on capabilities within existing theories and disciplines (Sen, 1999:110-145). At the same time it is being established as a new research framework in which dimensions of poverty and development are measured according to indicators which are specific to different settings and contexts. The approach was originally mainly initiated within economics and philosophy, but then developed in a multi-disciplinary way (Roche, 2009; Unterhalter, 2003). The use of social theory to amplify the capability approach, as will be done in this thesis, is therefore an ongoing project.

The livelihoods approach is furthermore used as a complementary approach in this thesis. The combination of the livelihoods approach and the capability approach has been undertaken in other studies (Kleine, 2010:109) and this combination enables the researcher working in a low income area to focus on the ways in which livelihoods are influenced by opportunity structures and by individual choice. I selected this emphasis because the assessment of an improvement in the livelihoods of the participants had been part of the original research objectives[5]. The context of Site C in Khayelitsha is one of extreme poverty, in which the need for better livelihoods is self-evident. The participating women furthermore chose the improvement of basic income as the aspiration they wanted to pursue.

1.3 Khayelitsha and migration
The research setting is Site C in Khayelitsha near Cape Town in South Africa. Apart from the emphasis on aspirations and capabilities, the thesis will also focus on portraying aspects of peoples' daily lives and struggles in the township Khayelitsha, within the perspective of their migration to Cape Town in search of better opportunities. Preston (1996:xiv) wrote that social theorists of the classical European tradition "were concerned with making sense of the shift from agrarian feudal societies to industrial capital societies" and later also with how the expansion of industrial capitalism drew in "Third World territories." The phenomenon of migration to connect oneself and one's family to better employment and other opportunities

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[4] The exact relationship between the capability approach and the human development approach will be explored in chapter three.
[5] See chapter six, point 8, on p. 130.

or capabilities is therefore a universal process. In 2009 there were more than 215 million migrants in countries other than their own, and 700 million people were involved in internal migration within their own countries to seek better opportunities.[6] The causes of migration are seen to be located in global economic structures, including labour structures in receiving countries; different local structures; social capital formation which draws people to where other family members are, and factors such as gender freedom. To this should be added the different social policies which governments formulate, and a range of market forces which might impact on migration (Piché, 2013; Massey, 2012; De Haas, 2010).

In South Africa's Eastern and Western Cape regions this process became rooted over the last thirty to forty years, and is the background against which most families live their lives. I shall describe and analyse how this happens, what people aspire to by coming to the urban area, to what extent achieving their aspirations is possible, what happens to their children, how the education system serves them, and what the internal dynamic of this process of social transformation is. It will be done through intimate conversations with a group of women who are trying to improve their own position. Their hopes and dreams and the constraints they face will be the material of the thesis. To what extent the attempts to realise their aspirations impact on their opportunities (or capabilities) to make the shift out of poverty and possibly into the urban lower middle class will be discussed and analysed. The scope for their own agency and personal willpower and motivation will also be explored. The theme of the study is therefore a micro-exploration of a global process – maybe one of the main social transformations of our time.

1.4 Case studies as a narrative thread

In order to deepen the analysis and to give an integrated understanding of the dynamics at play in the lives of the participating women, I shall present short case studies of six of the active women in the project. I shall present the case studies here, and continuously return to them in the course of the dissertation.[7]

- **Francis** is a 56 year old woman from a small village near Umtata in the Eastern Cape. Her father was an affluent chief with 300 heads of cattle and 8000 sheep. He had five wives and thirty four children. Her mother was the third wife and she was the youngest of her mother's nine children. Her mother was an orphan who entered this marriage in the mistaken belief that it would bring her security. Instead she was "disciplined" by her husband by means of whippings. Francis' own relationship with her father was distant but good. Her childhood experiences however left her with unresolved anger. She left school at the age of seventeen to get married. She is a

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[6]

http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20648762~pagePK:64257043~piPK:437376~theSitePK:4607,00.html

[7] All the names of the participating women mentioned in the dissertation have been changed, except in the case of Vicky Ntozini, the peer mentor to whom the thesis is dedicated. She was a public figure in the area, and was not a research participant but rather a resource person.

caring mother of seven children, and is highly motivated to try to improve conditions in Site C. Francis has the ability to plan and organise exceedingly well. She therefore takes up leadership roles, but often has episodes of conflict when others react to her brusque style and blame her for being controlling. She is very involved in political processes and structures, makes a living by doing sewing, and runs an NPO[8] which supports AIDS orphans in her street. She is in training as an *igqirha* (a traditional diviner and healer), and is very active in the Zionist church. One of her most outstanding characteristics is her determination to succeed.

- **Nomaliso** is a 41 year old single mother of three children. She was raised by her grandmother in the Eastern Cape and in turn her mother played an important role in raising her children, especially the eldest two. She is an intelligent woman who had aspirations to study for a nurse or a doctor, but dropped out of school in grade 12 and shortly afterwards had her first child. The father of her son married somebody else. The father of her second son died of AIDS and also infected her with the disease. This was a major adjustment but now that there are good care systems in the local clinics she manages well. She had a third child, a daughter, by a third partner who lived with her for a while but who also eventually moved out. She has tried to work for short periods, but is low on energy and normally can do only a limited amount. Nomaliso played an important role in *Someleze*,[9] and is a natural mediator and peace maker. She has good organisational skills and speaks well. She has many aspirations and plans but is slow to take initiative, possibly due to her HIV positive status.

- **Nella** was born 61 years ago in Hlankomo, a small village in the Eastern Cape, as the youngest of four siblings. Her mother had a degenerative disease and her father left her for another woman when the children were very small. Nella took care of her mother until she died in 1975. Nella has had 8 children of her own, of which 6 survived. She never married. When her mother died, she moved to Butterworth, a town in the Eastern Cape, where she made blankets. She worked in the cutting room and with an over-locking machine, but she earned only R8 per week. This was not enough for her and her children, and she came to Site C in Khayelitsha in 1986. She got a job as a domestic worker, but again the wages were so low that she decided it was not worth her time. Her daughter got a job as a hairdresser and soon after that Nella borrowed R200 from a neighbor and started a family hairdressing salon in her house. As a member of the Homeless People's Federation she also built her own house in 1997 from bricks the group had made themselves. She has 8 grandchildren and is still active in the Sewing group that started under *Someleze*. She is the chairperson of this sewing group.

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[8] NPO: Not for Profit Organisation

[9] *Someleze* is the NPO started by the women who worked collectively on their aspirations in the project described here. It means "We strengthen each other".

- **Noxolo** is 43 years old and was born in the Eastern Cape. Neither of her parents had had formal education but her father could read and write. He worked in Cape Town, she thinks as a petrol attendant, when she was a child. He lived in shacks in a range of places, like Langa, Nyanga East and in the Modderdam squatter camp. From time to time the whole family would join him in Cape Town. When she was two she was in Cape Town when she contracted polio, which caused her to spend many years in hospital and which left her with a limp. When she was between six and eight years old the family moved back to the rural areas. Because she had been sick they had to perform ceremonies for the ancestors, and the end of each of her small fingers had to be amputated by a traditional healer. Neither of her parents now worked, and they were very poor. With assistance from her school principal she eventually applied for and got a disability grant, and when she was in grade 11 she came to Site C in Khayelitsha to live with her brother and his wife, and to finish her schooling here. Because of the disability grant her mother sent various other family members with her so that she could also support them, and life was very hard at that stage. She fell pregnant, and left school, only finishing her matric years later in the St Francis adult education centre in Langa. She got married in 1996 and had a very happy marriage with a man who was also disabled due to an accident at work. They had two children together and she tried many ways during these years to amplify their income. Her husband died in 2012 and she is once again attempting to get formal work.

- **Nozuko** is 49 years old and was born in Qumbu in the Eastern Cape. Her father worked for Eskom in Cape Town and came home at Christmas every year with money for school clothes. They were poor, however, and the money was never enough. Her mother was very strict and they often got beaten. Her husband is fifteen years older than she is and they have four children. He has also been abusive. He was retrenched in 1995 and since then they have had severe financial problems, to the extent that they have often gone without food.

- **Vida** is 49 years old and was born in Luxomo near King William's Town in the Eastern Cape. Her parents are both illiterate and she was the second of nine children, and the eldest daughter. They grew up very poor and her father worked, but did not earn a lot, while her mother sold vegetables and beer. When she was a teenager her father went to the mines for work and stayed away for many years, starting a new family. When he eventually came back it was with nothing except his clothes. When Vida was in grade 10[10] she decided not to go back to school after the holidays, as she did not have nice clothes like the others and felt bad. Her parents wanted her to return to school, but she rather took a range of jobs, and tried to contribute to the household income. She fell pregnant in her early twenties, but her son got TB meningitis when he was three years old and was very severely disabled. She looked after him for a few years but then took him to her mother while she came to Cape Town for work. He

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[10] The South African school system runs over twelve years, from grade one to twelve, also called matric.

died soon after. She did cleaning work, earning R1500 per month and sending some of it home. She got herself a shack, and one day she sat there thinking: *For how long am I going to live like this? I'll show all of you my strength.* She was 30 years old then, in 1994, and went back to school. Shortly after getting a good matric she was given $400 by one of the guests in the hotel where she did cleaning, and she spent it on a deposit at the University of the Western Cape. She subsequently received a government scholarship and obtained her BA degree with Xhosa and Political Studies, doing cleaning work when she was not in class. She married her husband and they have one daughter. She then started her own NPO, Iliso, in 2006 and renders a range of social services from her own informal home in Site C.

1.5 Overview of the thesis

In order to be able to assess whether the ways in which the participating women attempted to realise their aspirations contributed to increased functionings and capabilities, a number of preparatory steps have to be taken. The women's lives firstly have to be contextualised in terms of history and geographical space. Then the theoretical and conceptual tools which will be used have to be reviewed within the context of the available literature. There are three theory chapters, as there are three distinct theoretical themes, as will be seen below. Finally the research process and the findings will be described, before the assessment and analysis of the women's capabilities are dealt with.

The study will therefore be introduced in *chapter two* with a contextual overview of South African history as a struggle over power, land and labour (Terreblanche, 2002:5-8). Within this framework, the history of Xhosa people will be reviewed, with particular reference to their partial and circular migration over time from the rural Eastern Cape to the Western Cape. Trends in the political economy during the 20th century will provide the background to the examination of the question why this migration continues despite many problems in the Western Cape. I then describe the township of Khayelitsha, near Cape Town, its resources and its structures. A number of recent ACCEDE[11] studies in which I participated might provide material to help address the question of whether the citizens of Khayelitsha have access to real political opportunities. I lastly look at the ways in which the scholarly analysis of culture has changed globally, and particularly in relation to Xhosa migration studies, and what can be learnt from that.

In *chapter three* I shall present a review of literature on the capability approach, which will be the theoretical framework for the thesis. The different conceptual elements of the approach will be discussed, and attention will be given to the main differences between how Sen and Nussbaum developed the approach. Sen's version will primarily be adhered to here. I shall subsequently review different perspectives on the measurement of functionings and capabilities. Lastly I shall look at some of the debates on how a number of central theoretical issues are dealt with in the capability approach, namely individualism, adaptation, and

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[11] African Centre for Citizenship and Democracy, University of the Western Cape.

agency. The application of each of these factors in the capability approach reveal controversial aspects, and these will be discussed. I shall then proceed to look at literature on the application of the capability approach in development projects.

Following the exploration in chapter three of how agency is used in the capability approach, the *fourth chapter* will deal with how agency is conceptualised in a number of disciplines related to the use of the capability approach. I shall explore how agency is seen and used in economics, psychology and sociology or social theory, more broadly. Social theory will receive most emphasis, as this seems to be the field in which agency has been most extensively explored. The work of Parsons, Bourdieu, Giddens and Habermas will receive most attention. In addition the contributions of Archer, Latour, Long and Joas will also be reviewed. The interrelatedness of agency and structure will be dealt with, and I shall look broadly at elements of agency in these related disciplines which could play a role in enriching the capability approach.

In *chapter five* I shall review the relationship between aspirations and agency and propose that aspirations are agency unlocking. I also take forward the two proposals from chapter four, namely that some social theory constructs be used for an agency analysis in the capability approach and that agency in the capability approach be extended by a hermeneutic analysis of agency. I also suggest a list of six dimensions for agency analysis. A section follows on the conceptualisation of aspirations and agency, and the chapter is concluded with a review of research on aspirations following the publication of Appadurai's 2004 paper.

Chapter six will consist of an account of the research methodologies which were used in the design and execution of the field research in Khayelitsha. There were eight phases in the research process, and each of these phases had its own purpose, research methodology and informing theory. All the research activities can however be seen as aspects of action research, and I shall motivate why this approach was followed, and how it influenced the research process and outcomes. Furthermore both the AR component of the research as well as the assessment of capabilities have empirical as well as hermeneutic aspects. For this reason the study is also seen as an example of Q-squared research.

Two sets of findings of the research will then be given in *chapter seven*. I shall firstly give and analyse the findings of the household survey, which formed the benchmark data for the participating women. Then the aspirations which the women had expressed over the period will be reviewed, and I shall explore the ways in which their aspirations had changed over time.

In *chapter eight* I shall do a capability assessment for each of the nineteen women who could be reached in 2010, plus six others whose circumstances were known to us, thus a total of twenty five. A theoretical framework will be developed for this assessment, which will be

based on an adaptation of a diagram devised by Robeyns (2005b:98).[12] The diagram will guide the assessment process through different stages. Firstly means and constraints to achieving capabilities will be reviewed, as they are manifested in the social context. The investigation is therefore situated in its particular social context, as recommended by Sen (1999). Secondly conversion factors in the conversion of means into functionings will be reviewed. Subsequently the process of aspirations formation and choice will be discussed, which is influenced by personal history and identity. The ways in which agency is engaged to pursue goals, as well as the ways in which a person might adapt her aspiration, choice or action, will be considered. Achieved outcomes or functionings then enables the researcher to assess whether capabilities have been extended.

Chapter nine will consist of an analysis of the agency shown by the women in the course of the project, and specifically in the actions taken to achieve their aspirations. I shall use the theoretical outline I had developed in chapter five for this purpose, and perform four tasks in this chapter: I shall assess whether aspirations have been agency unlocking; I shall do a hermeneutic analysis of the agency of one of the women; I shall include some social theory constructs in the agency analysis, and I shall use the list of six proposed dimensions to assess the agency of the six women selected for the case studies.

The final chapter, chapter ten, will contain conclusions on whether deliberate efforts to realise aspirations can contribute to capability expansion, and the theoretical and practical conclusions which were reached will be discussed. This chapter will also contain recommendations on the ways in which aspirations can contribute to theoretical aspects as well as to practical applications within the capability approach.

A general comment needs to be made. When discussing how racist policies impacted on people in South Africa, it is impossible to do justice to the subject without referring to racial groups in society. I shall therefore refer to the Xhosa speaking people as African, and to the South-Africans of mixed race as Coloured. Collectively they are referred to as Black people, together with South Africans of Indian descent. This does not validate race and racial divisions, which can be seen as social constructs – it just recognises the ways in which the terminology has been used in South Africa, and continues to impact on the current generation.

The first step in achieving the intentions set out here is to draw a clear picture of the research context, both in terms of time and place. This will be done in chapter two.

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[12] This diagram will appear as diagram 6 in chapter eight, and also in Appendix 8, on the last page, in a fold-out format.

Chapter two
Khayelitsha in Cape Town as the research context: migration and settlement

In order to be able to understand the dynamics which could play a role in the lives of the women who are participating in the research, the history of the people of Khayelitsha and of Site C will be dealt with in this chapter. It is an extensive history, and so I shall attempt to concentrate on the themes which impact on people in Khayelitsha today. It is nevertheless necessary to thoroughly investigate both history and community in a background study, as this forms an inherent part of a capability analysis. The capability approach "needs to be thickened by giving attention to these collective and historical processes which underpin all human choices and affect the conditions in which human well-being can be promoted" (Deneulin, 2006:209). In the analysis of the study material I shall therefore indicate how and to what extent this history has impacted on the women who participated in the research. Some of them came to Khayelitsha from Crossroads or from backyard shacks in Cape Town, others came directly from the Eastern Cape or had parents who lived in Crossroads or in Modderdam during the time of influx control policies. This chapter will be introduced with the migration histories of the six women whose life stories were introduced in chapter one, as well as that of one of the peer mentors, Vicky Ntozini.

The historical discussion will be presented next, and will be done according to a number of main themes. The history of South Africa over the last four hundred years is a history of the struggle for power, land and labour (Terreblanche, 2002:5-8). These themes are particularly applicable to the history of the Xhosa people during the last two centuries (Conradie, 1992). At the same time South Africa has been marked by three different ideological paradigm shifts, each one of which deepened the racist attitudes towards Blacks. In the Cape Province evangelical humanitarianism was replaced around 1840 with Benthamite liberal utilitarianism, which had strong elements of racial superiority. This was to have an enduring influence on South Africa. Then the discovery of gold and diamonds in the last quarter of the 19th century led to a wave of British imperialism, and to the legitimisation of labour policies by Social Darwinism, a vulgar adaptation of Darwin's theory by Herbert Spencer. This led to a yet deeper racial ideology. The third shift was the rise of Afrikaner Christian Nationalism in the 1930's and the aggressive racist apartheid policies which were introduced from 1948 onwards, which built on previous policies but were arguably the most harmful of all (Terreblanche, 2002:252, 297).

I shall explore the details of this history as it led to the foundation of Khayelitsha, with emphasis on factors which led to the large-scale migration of Xhosa people to Cape Town, especially during the apartheid-era. A socio-economic and political profile of Khayelitsha will be followed by a brief discussion on the role of culture in Khayelitsha and in scholarly work on Xhosa migration.

The founder of the liberal school in history in South Africa, W. M. MacMillan,[13] believed that history should not merely provide a record of what had happened, but should be "the study of the origins of contemporary social problems" (Saunders, 1988:62). The history which will be described here is in fact the trajectory along which the contemporary situation in Cape Town unfolded, and without which the lives of the women in Site C and their quest for "a better life" cannot be fully comprehended.

2.1 Seven short migration histories

Before I summarise the history of the Xhosa people I shall give a brief account of the migration histories of the six women whose lives and experiences were introduced in chapter one. In addition one of the peer mentors will also be discussed here.

- **Francis**: Francis got married when she was seventeen years old, and eventually followed her husband to Cape Town when he came here in search of work. They struggled financially, and lived in a shack in a backyard in Gugulethu for a long time – the backyard of one of the "Gugulethu seven," a group of famous anti-apartheid activists who were ambushed and shot by the police in 1986.[14] From there they moved to Crossroads. In 1985 Francis and her husband heard that land was available for settlement in Site C and they moved there on the 20th of May, 1985. They initially received a tent, and replaced it with a shack later in 1985.

- **Nomaliso**: Nomaliso was raised by her grandmother in the Eastern Cape, while her mother came to Cape Town to earn money for the family. Her mother lived in Crossroads where she lived through the history which will be recounted below. She moved to Site C in 1985 and Nomaliso joined her there soon afterwards.

- **Nella**: Nella lived in the Eastern Cape and came to Cape Town in 1986 when she was not earning enough to keep her family. This was just when Site C was being founded and she got a site for a house, which she built herself.

- **Noxolo**: As a child Noxolo was raised in the Eastern Cape and together with her family she visited her father who had come to Cape Town for work, sometimes for a few years at a time. He lived in a series of shacks in Langa, Nyanga-East and in the Modderdam squatter camp. He was continually pursued by the police under the influx control legislation and was arrested a number of times. In 1989, when she was in grade 11, Noxolo moved to Cape Town to live with her brother and his wife in Site C. When she was married she obtained a house in Site C.

- **Nozuko**: Nozuko got married in the Eastern Cape and then came with her husband to

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[13] MacMillan (1885-1974), a South African by birth, worked in South Africa between 1910 and 1933.
[14] See http://www.dacpm.org/jor-04.htm

Durbanville where he was working in the steel works. He had accommodation in the male barracks and she had a 14 day pass to visit him, sharing a bed in a (male) dormitory. They did not want to live like this and so they moved to Crossroads where there was an opportunity to live as a married couple. They had a room with relatives. She was told by her husband's employers to ignore the 14 day pass – they wrote her a letter to say that she had come to see a doctor. When violence erupted in Crossroads in 1985 she and her husband moved with the first or the second group of people to Site C.

- **Vida**: Vida moved to Cape Town in 1983 and lived with relatives in Nyanga. In the late 1980's she obtained a small shack in Macasa, in Khayelitsha, where she met her husband. After they were married they were given the larger shack of her in-laws in Site C.

- **Vicky**, one of the peer mentors, lived in Crossroads while she studied at UCT. When her funding was stopped and she couldn't get a scholarship as there was a quota for African students, she had to discontinue her studies in electrical engineering. She got married, lived through the Crossroads crisis and moved to Site C with her husband when all the Crossroads inhabitants moved in 1985.

Four of the seven women discussed above therefore lived briefly in Crossroads before moving to Site C in Khayelitsha. Two others lived in other informal settlements in Cape Town before moving to Site C, while Nella moved directly from the rural area. They reflect some of the different migration experiences which the Khayelitsha inhabitants had, but they were all affected by apartheid and by influx control legislation. These policies were however based on earlier colonial strategies and it is necessary to have a long-term perspective on the history of South Africa.

2.2 The political economy of South Africa

Following the crisis of the European feudal system in the 15th and 16th centuries, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands and later Britain launched a world system of global commerce and trade led by a wealthy merchant class. The Cape was initially used by the Dutch *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC)* as a halfway station for their trade with the East, with permanent European settlement since the mid- 17th century, but eventually the Cape wine industry became profitable in its own right. South Africa therefore gradually became part of the mechanism of capital accumulation of its colonisers – the Dutch as traders and the British as industrialists. In 1795 the British took the Cape from the Dutch to safeguard their lucrative trade with India and to ensure that the French would not do so, lost it again briefly to the Dutch and finally re-conquered it in 1806. Britain was to be South Africa's colonial power from that date to 1910 (Le Cordeur, 1986; Wallerstein, 1974).

The British were to change their new colony dramatically. The VOC had been mercantilist, and under their rule labour had been controlled by coercive means, of which slavery was the main one. An important component of the industrialisation which Britain was spearheading at

that time, under the influence of Adam Smith, was the idea of a labour market where people could sell their labour as they wanted to. This was a completely foreign notion to the South African landowners, who had largely been using slave labour up to that stage. Furthermore, the indigenous tribes were communally organised, with an emphasis on kinship, and the ideas of private property and economic self-interest were unfamiliar to them. Up to that stage they had been largely uninvolved in the labour situation on white farms, as this work was done by slaves from Asian and from other African countries. Now an effort was made to hire Xhosa men and women as workers on frontier farms. "It led to long and bitter conflicts, largely revolving around the legal, moral and economic redefinition of the three factors of production: labour, land and capital. Britain redefined these factors in a way calculated to promote its own economic interests and its power as the centre of a global empire" (Terreblanche, 2002:179, 180).

Two years after the British had taken over the Cape Colony they suspended slave trade in 1808. By this time there were 29 000 slaves from Dutch East India or Java and from other African countries, more in fact than the 20,000 settlers, who were mainly from the Netherlands, Germany, Scandinavia, and France. There were different indigenous Koi-San tribes at the Cape, some of whom moved further inland as the settlers arrived and others who were all but decimated by smallpox. Large numbers of San or hunter-gatherers were killed at this time, in what Magubane calls a holocaust (Magubane, 2010). Settler farmers and traders had some support of first the Dutch and then the British colonial authorities, but the Dutch/Afrikaans farmers wanted political autonomy and moved northwards. In the central part of the country the Afrikaans farmers became involved in the consequences of the *Mfecane* or "scattering" which occurred at the time as a result of Zulu expansionism, and in their turn displaced the Ndebele people, who moved northwards into Shona territory, in what is now Zimbabwe (Terreblanche, 2002:223).

The discovery in South Africa of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1886 introduced the next important phase. Together these discoveries of some of the richest sources of these minerals in the world transformed the whole of South Africa dramatically and permanently. The agricultural country which had exported meat, wool and wine now experienced an inflow of international fortune seekers. Britain also showed new interest in South Africa, as it had been overtaken by Germany in industrial production, and by Germany and the U.S. in trade. The British therefore needed to maximise their access to the new wealth in South Africa (Terreblanche, 2002:182). Six mining and finance houses were formed between 1887, when Rhodes and Rudd formed Gold Fields of South Africa, and 1889, when Barnato formed Johannesburg Consolidated Investments. Later in 1889 they formed the Chamber of Mines, which organised the recruitment and compensation of workers (Nattrass and Seekings, 2010:6). The need to consolidate these interests led to a series of British imperial wars to achieve state power over South Africa, ending with the Second Anglo-Boer War and with British victory in 1902.

Following the Peace of Vereeniging in 1902 a political and economic infrastructure for mineral exploration was gradually constructed, in which the African population of the

country was regarded as the manual labourers. The proletarianisation of the Xhosa[15] and the Zulu which had occurred during the mid-19th century meant that this was reasonably easily achieved. Other groups were however still involved in subsistence agriculture, and therefore the South African Party (SAP) of Botha and Smuts reached an agreement with the Unionists, who represented financial and mining interest, and in 1913 introduced the Land Act. This act aimed to satisfy white farmers and the mining sector simultaneously, and stipulated that Africans were no longer allowed to own land outside the "native reserves", which amounted to 8.3% of South African land. The men could be employed as labourers by white farmers and mines outside the reserves, on condition that they would carry passes (Terreblanche, 2002:260).

The years following the formation of a Union in 1910 were characterised by economic stagnation and by the efforts of the Union government to create state institutions which would attempt to shape the economy to maximize profits from minerals. In 1911, 22% of South Africa's national income was contributed by agriculture, and less than 27% by mining, but mining developed fast and by 1930 South Africa produced half of the world's gold (Nattrass and Seekings, 2010:4). The growth in the gold mines was directly connected to the ability of the government to provide cheap, unskilled African labour to do the hard work of mining at deep levels. Without this, deep level mining would probably not have been undertaken. White wages were high, and Chinese labourers were imported between 1906 and 1910. This led to industrial protest and eventually to the 1922 Rand Revolt, with a bolshevist group fighting for workers' rights. There were however also racial divisions in the revolt, and white workers attempted to preserve their advantage in the industry. The revolt was suppressed and followed by political settlements, guaranteeing white privilege in the mining industry. So the trend was established to have a dual economy, with artificially protected wages for white workers, on a par with wages in Australia and New Zealand. At the same time there was strict control over black workers, who worked at minimum wages. In addition to protected work in the mines, one in twelve white men was employed in public works programmes by 1933, following the First Carnegie Enquiry into Poverty. Black poverty had not been part of the investigation and that exacerbated the economic exclusion of Africans.

The period between 1933 and 1945 was one of fast growth and of structural change in the South African economy. South Africa abandoned the gold standard in 1932, which led to the depreciation of the exchange rate. The resultant increase in the global dollar price of gold increased local gold revenues, and when taxes were also increased government could create a substantial number of industrial employment opportunities. During this pre-war period the state furthermore developed into a modern and efficient operation with a competent bureaucracy, able to support future industrial development (Nattrass and Seekings, 2010:5-8). During the war years black workers were employed to replace the white workers who had gone to war, their wages increased, and the economic exclusion trend was temporarily

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[15] This was mainly achieved through a system of 'apprenticeship' after the abolition of slavery in 1834 (Terreblance, 2002:225).

reversed. This came to an end at the end of the war, with influx control restored, lower wages, and the repression of strike action.

After the National Party had won the national election in 1948, racist employment policies were much more harshly enforced, yet the economy grew steadily between 1948 and the early 1970's. Real GDP per capita almost doubled during this period. The gold mining and agricultural sectors both grew fast, but even so were overtaken by the manufacturing sector. The post-war economy was driven by import-substitution strategies, in which capital-intensive production of cars and electrical household equipment provided work for skilled white workers, and also canvassed their political support (Gelb, 2003:18). The key problem in this period was that economic growth was not accompanied by job creation, and over time this structural problem caused a debilitating degree of poverty and inequality in South Africa which endures into our time (Nattrass and Seekings, 2010:3, 32). White workers were better protected than ever, and black workers were increasingly subject to pass controls. More industrial action meant more mechanisation, and as productivity was low, the growth rate started to slump. When import substitution therefore came to a gradual end in the 1970's manufacturing had not yet become internationally competitive (Gelb, 2003:19). Although the economy grew very well at this stage, it did not grow faster than comparable economies elsewhere, and annual economic growth declined from 5% in the 1960's to 3% a decade later, and 1.5% in the 1980's. This was less than the population growth rate, and so by the 1980's GDP per capita had actually declined (Nattrass and Seekings, 2010:34). "Structural economic change was accompanied by a fundamental shift in the labour market, from chronic labour shortages to what was almost the highest measured unemployment rate in the world" (Nattrass and Seekings, 2010:2). Gelb (2003: 22-23) maintains that it was this structural crisis in the South African economy, two decades before the settlement which ended apartheid, which determined the shape of the settlement in the transitional period, and which led to a set of crucial compromises, as will be seen below.

During the 1980's the economy was further characterised by the formation of six very large conglomerates, which together controlled 86% of the shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. "For people with the skills, qualifications, racial classification, or pass law status to be able to secure employment in the expanding, better-paying classes, the period was one of rising prosperity. For people competing for the stagnant number of unskilled jobs, the period was one of continuing or deepening hardship" (Nattrass and Seekings, 2010:41).

The question why the first democratic government of South Africa was so slow to change the structural inequalities inherent in the economy has often been discussed. The popular line is that the RDP[16] phase during the election in 1994 was based on a 'basic needs' approach, while the adoption of GEAR[17] as a strategy in 1996 indicated a swing towards a Neo-Liberal position. Stephen Gelb (2003) argues that this is over-simplistic, and that both of these

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[16] The Reconstruction and Development Programme was seen as a response to poverty and inequality.
[17] The Growth, Employment and Redistribution macroeconomic strategy.

policies contained both basic needs and market-oriented tenets. He further argues that the ANC had little choice but to accept the hand which the business sector extended to it, albeit on its own terms and from a position it had spent a century to fortify. The ANC inherited a well- functioning economy, with good fundamentals, but not one which could be adapted for industrial manufacturing by a large number of unskilled workers – the excluded poor. "In sum…the broad outline of the dominant policy framework had been clear at the start of the transition. Structural factors meant that the model would rest on the accommodation between the ANC and big business, creating a distributional coalition of white business and emerging black business, resting on policies to promote globalisation and BEE."[18] (Gelb, 2003:31). Economic growth, powered by non-racial capitalism, was therefore the main strategy, and basic needs and redistribution was a separate and independent strategy, which would rely on growth but would not be implemented as an integral part of the main strategy (*Ibid*).[19]

The transition period, 1989 -1994, was characterised by a severe recession. In the post-1994 period the government maintained contractionary economic policies in order to gain credibility with global lenders, and re-committed itself to financial stringency. Spending on economic and social infrastructure was held back in favour of necessary current social spending. In terms of monetary policy an inflation band of 3-6% was adopted in 1999 for 2002 onwards. In the post-apartheid period there was in fact no consistent signal to producers, leading to a lack of international investments. This was reinforced by global economic trends for developing economies, and although some important redistributive pro-poor programmes were introduced in South Africa, such as better spending on education, housing and particularly on social security, the all-important employment creation for unskilled workers did not take place. Furthermore, the "deal" which was made during the transition to use BEE as the distributive element in the economy did not have any advantages for investors, as BEE beneficiaries did not invariably plough profits back into the economy, and the investors did not want to pay for this element. Lastly, although there has been considerable social spending since 1994, there have not been sufficient opportunities for asset accumulation by the poor (Gelb, 2003:34-43).

The post-apartheid period saw some of the big conglomerates "unbundling" and often relocating with the relaxation of exchange controls, partly as a result of a lack of confidence in the economic management of the new South Africa (Terreblanche, 2002:82). There was also a rise in productivity and in wages. This however meant that fewer were employed, and once again the trend was to "shed" the lower skilled workers. The economy grew sluggishly during this period with an annual GDP per capita growth rate of 1.2% and an increasing dependency on foreign investment left the country vulnerable to negative global economic trends. Overall, unemployment increased during the late 1990's.

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[18] BEE: Black Economic Empowerment
[19] Terreblance (2002:82) and Nattrass and Seekings (2010:60) maintain that the new government's slow response to the needs of the poor was the result of pre-1990 debts and the cost of the transition. Gelb agrees that these costs occurred while contractionary policies were employed to reduce inflation, but sees the analysis as an overly agency-oriented emphasis which takes insufficient account of structural conditions (Gelb, 2003:22, 34).

One last problem which has to be mentioned here is the decline in the standard of the bureaucracy in recent years, with the result that many new programmes which were well designed could not be successfully implemented. The problem is not equally bad across all state departments, but it is pervasive (Terreblance, 2012:124-129). Ivor Chipkin ascribes it partly to a particular institutional culture which developed in the "homeland administrations" during the apartheid period, where senior bureaucrats, companies and traditional elites benefitted from economic opportunities in a system which "discouraged the establishment of predictable and rule-driven bureaucracies" (Chipkin, 2012:3). According to Chipkin many thousands of these bureaucrats were absorbed into the new democracy and brought the institutional culture with them (*Ibid*).

As a result of these trends, at the turn of the 21st century fewer than 50% of South African citizens of working age were employed, and skilled labour shortages constrained employment creation for both skilled and unskilled workers (Nattrass and Seekings, 2010:2). The unemployed group is seen by Seekings and Nattrass (2005:271) as a "discrete underclass,"[20] largely disconnected from employment opportunities. The structural features of the economy had therefore stayed the same despite the transition to democracy, and had in fact worsened prospects for aspiring job seekers. In a recent review of employment trends in South Africa, Banerjee, Galiani, Levinsohn, McLaren and Woolard (2006:53-56) find that these structural changes were brought about by the diminishing demand for unskilled labour in the mines, due to the fact that the current levels have been exploited and gold mining now has to go to deeper levels where mechanisation is more prevalent; agricultural production has shrunk, and with it job opportunities in that sector, and lastly large numbers of African women have entered the job market for unskilled work, driving up the unemployment figures. A particular problem seems to be that of young people who do not enter the job market, despite having a school-leaving certificate, and who become discouraged work seekers very soon.

The authors of the newly formulated National Development Plan, the guiding document for South Africa's development programme, maintain that South Africa will find it difficult to participate in low skilled production when Chinese wages rise, due to South Africa's high cost structure. They project high targets for job creation, largely through small and medium size private businesses, and by improving educational standards. They also indicate the need to change the structure of the South African economy (National Planning Commission, 2012:22-29). It seems unlikely that these strategies, if applied along current lines, will be sufficient to break through the barriers described above.

Most of the women who participated in this study have been directly affected by these political and economic trends. As Xhosa speakers they also inherited a history of imposed deprivation, to which we will now turn.

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[20] The term 'underclass' is used to indicate a sector of South African society which has been socio-economically excluded, and is not employed in a derogatory sense.

2.3 Xhosa history as a struggle for autonomy, land and economic survival

During the early period of colonial settlement the Xhosa people of the Eastern Cape were not directly involved with the colonial system as they were cattle and grain farmers, far from Cape Town where the colony was administered from. The Xhosa state form was based on a loose network of alliances, and they integrated other tribes who needed the protection of a larger nation, such as the Mfengu. Xhosa kings and chiefs were not despots but had to live as ordinary people, accountable to their subjects (Mostert, 1992:199, 200). Their networks included trade alliances with the Portuguese in Mozambique, where mainly ivory was traded, and trade networks with the colonial powers in Cape Town, where they traded copper, cattle, iron and beads over a distance of about a thousand kilometers. They also developed strong military power as a result of the political dynamics in the region, which included the territorial aspirations of the Zulu kings (Hall, 1987:127; Le Cordeur, 1986).

During the 18th century settler farmers of European origin moved eastwards into the interior region of the country and thus came into contact with the Xhosa. Conflict gradually arose over land and cattle. This led to a series of confrontations between 1779 and 1879 which became known as "Africa's one hundred year war." Both colonial powers, the Dutch[21] and the British, largely protected the settlers' interests, with legal and military means.

Sampie Terreblanche (2002:180-183) supplies a useful framework for understanding British colonial policies in South Africa during the 19th century. During the *first phase*, from 1795 to 1814, the permanence of British rule in South Africa was uncertain and it was not clear whether Dutch colonists would stage an uprising. The Dutch farmers in the Eastern Cape were therefore supported when Cradock sent British troops to fight against the Xhosa in 1812. During the *second phase*, from 1814 to 1840, Britain consolidated its economic and military presence in South Africa. All ten British governors between 1814 and 1852 had been senior military officers in the Napoleonic wars, and they took a strong military approach to the tensions in the Eastern Cape. Lord Charles Somerset, who became governor of the Cape in 1814, attempted to address the conflict by pushing 20 000 Xhosas across the Fish River, and so securing a larger area for white farmers. In addition he arranged an emigration scheme for British settlers, and about 4000 – 5000 British settlers arrived during 1820 to settle in the Eastern Cape under difficult conditions. Sir Harry Smith also took an aggressive military approach. In four big frontier wars fought between 1818 and 1853, the Xhosa, who also acquired some guns during this period, were convincingly defeated in a range of bloody battles. They lost much of their land and cattle to the new British settlers.

The frontier wars between the British and the Xhosa, and especially those which were conducted before 1853, can be partly interpreted in the light of two historical processes which happened outside of South Africa. The first is the passing of the Reform Act in Britain in

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[21] Notable exceptions had been Landdrost Maynier, who in 1793 attempted to be equitable in dealing with white –black conflict, and Andries Stockenstrom, Commissionar-General on the Eastern frontier. As a result they became unpopular with some of the white farmers (Mostert, 1992:248).

1832, which gradually shifted the balance of power in the British parliament from the old aristocracy to the emerging industrial bourgeoisie. This group was building its capitalism on the ideas of Ricardo, which included international free trade and the merciless determination of minimum wages at subsistence levels. The frontier wars can therefore be seen not only as an effort to intervene in the conflict between the indigenous Xhosa and the settler farmers, but more importantly as a series of events which "set off a process of deliberate proletarianisation aimed at integrating them into the colonial economy as unfree wage labourers" (Terreblanche, 2002:181). A series of oppressive labour laws were passed, regulating the recruitment, labour conditions and control over farm workers (Terreblance, 2002:196). Unfree wage labour was particularly and deliberately advanced by Governor Sir George Grey from 1854 onwards, who saw the labour recruitment policy for black labourers on white-owned farms and in towns as a "civilizing" process (Mostert, 1992:1170, 1219).

The second external process was related to the debate in Britain between humanitarians and more hard-lined imperialists about the ethics of military intervention in the colonies. In reaction to the decimation of the Aborigines in Australia and the Maori in New Zealand, an Aborigines Act was passed in Britain in 1835 and the Aborigines Protection Society was founded by the British Foreign Office. In 1837 a hearing was held in London about the situation on the Eastern Cape frontier. One of the witnesses was Andries Stockenstrom, an Afrikaans leader born and raised on the Eastern Cape frontier, and former Commissioner–General of the frontier. He had left the area in disgust in 1833. Lord Glenelg, the British Colonial Secretary from 1835 to 1839, attended the hearings and heard Stockenstrom's testimony, which was given over an extended period. Stockenstrom testified that he had witnessed how ongoing cattle raids and reprisals had become the way in which white and black co-existed on the frontier. Nine times out of ten, he maintained, cattle had been lost by negligent white farmers, rather than stolen, or fraudulent reports were made. When cattle had been stolen, the wrong people were often punished, and often inappropriately. This led to a cycle where the Xhosa tried to defend their possessions and their people, white farmers used violence, and this led to war, "war without end" (Mostert, 1992:757). Governor Sir Benjamin D'Urban however referred to the Xhosa as "sunk in barbarism …thiefs…bloodthirsty beyond measure" (ibid). Lord Glenelg wrote to the governor in the strongest terms: "I know not that a greater real calamity could befall Great Britain than that of adding Southern Africa to the list of regions which have seen their aboriginal inhabitants disappear under the withering influence of European neighbourhood. It is indeed a calamity reducible to no uncertain standards or positive measurement, but invokes whatever is most to be dreaded in bringing upon ourselves the reproaches of mankind and the weight of national guilt" (quoted in Magubane, 2010:6). Glenelg subsequently dismissed D'Urban as Governor in 1837, although he remained in the South African military force until 1846. Magubane (2010) argues that the large-scale survival of the indigenous people of South Africa hinged on this hearing, and that the fact that the indigenous people survived with language, customs and some land intact was due to the humanitarian insight amongst some leaders in Britain that power and land in the colonies could not be bought at any price. At the same time Lord Glenelg's 150 page document to D'Urban had the effect of a bombshell on the white settlers, as they felt that the colonial government could not be counted on to protect them in a situation of undeniable

vulnerability (Mostert, 1992:759). By 1838 many of the Dutch or Afrikaans farmers from the area decided to move further north and joined the Great Trek.[22]

The *third phase* of 19th century British colonialism consisted of the fifty years between 1840 and 1890, when Xhosa resistance had largely been broken, and when many were forced by economic need into unfree labour as farm workers to white farmers. The white farmers who remained in the area had lost about 6 000 slaves when slavery was abolished in 1838, and needed labourers. The process of the proletarianisation of the Xhosa and Khoisan in the Eastern Cape was given a major impetus with the declaration of the Masters and Servants Ordinance of 1841. This act forced African people 'who may be inclined to lead an idle and vagabondising life' after they had lost their land and livelihoods, to work on settler farms (Terreblance, 2002:196). This was the first of a series of ordinances aimed at ensuring that the Xhosa and other indigenous people fulfil the role of manual labourers, and many of these laws remained on the South African statutes until 1974. The placement of farm workers was carefully administered, and only a certain number of families could be settled on any one farm, to ensure an equal distribution of workers on all farms. Negotiations had to take place through a black captain in the military.

The British also continued their wars against the Xhosa, in spite of Lord Glenelg's missive, and the Eighth Frontier War (1850-3) was to be the most destructive of the border wars. Homes and crops were destroyed, cattle and land taken, and about 16 000 Xhosa died during the war (Terreblanche, 2002:198). It can probably be seen as a sign of desperation that most of the Xhosa responded to the prophecy of the sixteen year old prophetess Nongqawuse. Noël Mostert (1992:1171) states: "In 1856, three years after the conclusion of the largest, cruelest and most penalising of the frontier wars, the frontier Xhosa were in a severe state of spiritual, political and economic crisis after half a century of progressive land loss, strenuous assault upon its traditions and customs, and military defeat." In that year Nongqawuse foretold that if the Xhosa would kill their cattle, many of which had a lung disease at the time, the ancestors would drive the white people away and provide youth and new cattle to the Xhosa. Many did so, and the Xhosa suffered large-scale famine and starvation. This also played a role in their subjugation, as they did not receive assistance when famine struck. Bank (2011:4) notes that "[t]here is ongoing debate as to whether colonial officials and the Governor of the Cape Colony, who had been struggling to defeat the Xhosa on the Eastern Frontier, conspired to popularise the visions of the Xhosa prophetess." Mtuze (2004:152-153) writes that African people have always been suspicious that this had been a plot initiated by Grey.

To "encourage" Africans to work, a head tax was introduced in 1864, but practical difficulties with collecting this tax caused it to be changed to a hut tax in 1870. A Pass Law passed in 1866 also required all farm workers to carry passes, and failure to do so led to imprisonment (Heydenreych, 1986:153). The discovery of diamonds and gold eventually led to the *fourth*

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[22] The 'Great Trek' was the movement of Dutch/Afrikaans families from the Western and Eastern Cape to the central and northern areas of South Africa from 1838 onwards, following especially the history recounted here.

phase, which lasted from 1890 to 1910, during which time the proletarianisation of rural African men was entrenched. This was dealt with in the previous section.

The Xhosa people realised that it was not in their power to regain their land, but they formed the first African political organisation in the country's history in the Eastern Cape in 1882, largely in order to offer some resistance to increasingly oppressive legislation (Motlhabi, 1984:1-2). African South Africans had furthermore assumed that the peace agreement after the Anglo-Boer War in 1902 would give them an equal vote, but this discussion was "postponed" and was in fact never taken up in parliamentary discussions again, until the 1980's (Mostert, 1992:1268). The ANC was subsequently formed in 1912 to represent African political interests, and to mobilise resistance against disenfranchisement. Africans who were resident in the Western Cape were part of the provincial non-racial franchise, but this was withdrawn in 1936.

The National Party constructed its edifice of apartheid legislation on this historical foundation from 1948 onwards, and attempted to limit the Xhosa people to their "homeland" in the Eastern Cape – an area reduced by the wars of the 19th century to one which could not sustain its population. Moreover, as a result of the proletarianisation policies described here, the subsistence agriculture of the Eastern Cape collapsed in the mid 1950's, to the extent that it was no longer able to fully support people who had become involved in a monetary economy (Simkins, 1983). At present, South Africa has consequently lost its subsistence agriculture base, which in many other African countries still forms a bulwark against poverty, and instead there are about 200 000 small farmers who grow vegetables for personal use and for a small income (Cousins, 2012).

Another extremely harmful consequence of apartheid legislation has been the systematic erosion of the education system for African citizens. Not all children were able to attend school, but in some areas there were excellent missionary schools which ensured a very good standard of education. These schools were closed under apartheid and Dr Verwoerd infamously declared that Africans only need enough education for manual labour. Furthermore, the government subsidy for the education of African children was drastically reduced, so that by 1969 the per capita spending on black children was 10.8% of that spent on white children (Terreblance, 2002:389); a factor which has also had long-term and devastating consequences for outcomes such as literacy and numeracy, years of education and monthly incomes (Van der Berg, 2001:174-186). In addition, there have been negative outcomes which are harder to measure, such as lower rates of self-confidence and autonomy, as will be seen in this study.

The policies which were devised to limit people to rural areas as a "reserve army of labour", despite the fact that these areas were in economic collapse following the deliberate policies discussed above, led to a migration movement to the urban areas of South Africa, which happened in contravention of and in protest against these policies. This theme will be explored next.

2.4 Xhosa migration to the Western Cape: Crossroads and Khayelitsha

Xhosa people started to settle in the Western Cape from the early years of the British occupation onwards. Between 1838 and 1840 a group of Mfengu, a multi-national group affected by the *Mfecane* or "scattering" and under the protection of the Xhosa, settled on the slopes of Table Mountain. They were soon joined by other work seekers, attracted by work opportunities in the Cape Town harbour and other industrial areas in Cape Town. This process accelerated after the Xhosa cattle killing of 1856, described above. Large groups of African work-seekers, mainly Xhosa, eventually settled in Papendorp, now Woodstock, until they were given permission to build their own huts between the Salt River Station and Main Road. This was a first recognition of the permanence of Africans in Cape Town. A smallpox epidemic in Salt River in 1882 led to the settlement of many people from this area in District Six, which was to be become a multi-racial settlement in central Cape Town (Saunders, 1980).

Although Cape Town society was largely liberal in outlook, many citizens felt threatened by the huge influx of people from the interior, and they exercised pressure on the government to create a separate area for African residents in the city. During the Anglo-Boer War between 1899 and 1902 many more people streamed to the relatively safe Cape Town, so that by 1900 there were about 10 000 Africans in the city. When bubonic plague broke out in 1901, and some of the first victims were Africans, the pressure increased, and African people were moved to Uitvlugt near Maitland, now Ndabeni (Saunders, 1979:140). The regulations for the control of the Uitvlugt Native Location moreover provided the blueprint for future township control in South Africa: the carrying of passes, strict control over the movement of individuals by the (white) superintendent, the enforcement of the temporary nature of the settlement, such as the prohibition on gardening or building, and the erection of large dormitories where only men would stay – in each of these about 500 men were accommodated in primitive conditions, while women and children had to return to the rural areas (Elias, 1983:56). This resettlement, and the burning of their possessions due to the threat of plague, was resisted by the Salt River community, and they staged a protest on the Grand Parade. The protesters were dispersed, but a tradition of resistance had begun.

By 1922 the local government in Cape Town decided to provide housing for Africans who were in the city, and this led to a new influx of people, so that soon there were 7 000 Africans squatting in the slum areas of Cape Town, ignoring the legal restrictions on their movements (Kinkhead-Weekes, 1985:96). Prime Minister Herzog then announced the "Coloured Labour Preference Policy" in 1924, paving the way for a more comprehensive and restrictive segregation policy and increased social and economic exclusion of African people from the Western Cape. New legislation in 1930 particularly excluded African women from coming to the Western Cape (De Tolly and Nash, 1984). In 1935 Ndabeni residents were moved to Langa, which was declared "full" when it had 5000 residents in 1939. At this stage there were

18 500 African people in Cape Town. By the end of the Second World War there were 38000, and once again provision had to be made, in the form of the new township Nyanga.[23]

This was the situation when the National Party won the national election in 1948 and soon after indicated that they would be following segregationist policies. Africans could only be in the Western Cape as migrant labourers, and that applied only to those born in the Western Cape, or those who had been working for one employer for ten years without interruption, or lived in one area without interruption for 15 years (Elias, 1983:26). By 1954 African women were registered for passes, and in 1955 the Secretary for Native Affairs, Dr. W. W. Eiselen announced that the government policy was to exclude all Africans from the Western Cape, and that the so-called Eiselen line, from Gordonia to Knysna, would mark the area within which very strict influx control would be enforced. Dr. Eiselen put it as follows: "Briefly and concisely put, our Native policy regarding the Western Province aims at the ultimate elimination of Natives from this region" (quoted by Goldin, 1984:9). As a result of this, more than 26 000 adults were transported from Cape Town to the reserves in the Eastern Cape between 1959 and 1962 (Lodge, 1983:212) – the beginning of a 25 year process which caused untold harm to large numbers of people. As was seen in the previous section, it had become very difficult to survive economically in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape, and legal access to urban work opportunities was virtually completely blocked. The result was that hundreds of thousands of men and women resisted these laws and just simply kept coming back to Cape Town again and again, despite numerous deportations, imprisonment and harsh repression. Women had particularly ignored the restrictions on them and joined their husbands in Cape Town, often living in primitive plastic shacks in the various temporary camps: Modderdam, Unibell, Werkgenot and Crossroads, near the Cape Town Airport. The Goldstone Commission of Enquiry (1993, 3.1.7) reported as follows about the residents of Crossroads at this time:

> "Their shacks were demolished by the authorities with monotonous regularity, often during the rainy winter months. They were frequently transported back to the homelands after having had their shacks demolished. Many of the attempts at removal erupted in violence and tragedy. These events focused international attention on Crossroads. In the course of time, the very existence of Crossroads was perceived as a symbol of defiance and resistance to apartheid laws."

In June 1976 there was a breakthrough when the residents of Crossroads, assisted by a number of progressive external organisations, won the status of an Emergency Camp (Cole, 1986). Soon people from other demolished areas began to move to Crossroads, where a spirit of resistance had started to grow. Two leaders in the area, Mr. Johnson Ngxobongwana and Mr. Oliver Memani, joined forces and formed the United Crossroads Committee (UCC), which obtained support from the Urban Foundation and other organisations. These progressive groupings mediated between the United Crossroads Committee and Dr. Piet

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[23] Langa means 'sun', and Nyanga 'moon.'

Koornhof, minister of Cooperation and Development, who eventually agreed in 1979 that the inhabitants of Crossroads would be counted, and that those on the list would then qualify for permanent housing in the area. The UCC agreed that the people in Crossroads would assist with the drawing up and control of the lists. What however happened was that people streamed to Crossroads from all over, in an effort to become part of the special dispensation afforded to the area. By the mid-1980's Crossroads had become the most densely populated single-storey settlement in the country (Goldstone, 1993, 1.3.12).

A different dynamic however developed at this stage – one which would have a lasting impact on the political life of the people of Khayelitsha. Johnson Ngxobongwana and Oliver Memani realised that there was potential profit in the situation, and set themselves up as headmen, or quasi traditional leaders, although they were not hereditary chiefs. Like traditional chiefs, they however demanded to get a material contribution from their followers – in this case a financial contribution from every household in "their areas", which made their leadership positions very lucrative. Because of the huge influx into the area there were by that time many more names on the lists than could be provided with housing, and this led to intense rivalry between these two leaders and their followers. By this time other headmen had also become active in the area, and this compounded the conflict. The scarcity of land, the uncertainty of the changing political climate, with pressure groups determined to achieve democracy and the government relenting and resisting in turn, and the possibility of financial gain proved to be an explosive combination. "Large numbers of people under the control of a squatter leader meant political power as well as a source of income for the squatter leader and his committee members. In the circumstances, squatter leaders exploited the opportunity of increasing their wealth and political power by selling rights to occupy land at Crossroads and collecting dues from people living within their areas" (Goldstone, 1993, 2.2).

This was the situation in 1984 when the National Party government realised that it would not be able to maintain its influx control legislation, and that it would have to agree to a permanent African presence in Cape Town. There were many more people than could be accommodated in the Crossroads area, and Prime Minister P. W. Botha flew over the whole area in a military helicopter to assess the situation. It became clear that the Driftsands area where Khayelitsha is now, about ten kilometers further out of town from Crossroads, would be ideal for a settlement which could be contained and surveilled. It was wedged between the ocean to the south and the highway to the north, with a Coloured township, Mitchell's Plain, to the west, and a military camp to the east (Bezuidenhout, 1988). Three areas of Khayelitsha (meaning "New Home") were opened up for settlement: a core house area with small brick houses, and two "site and service" areas, Site B and Site C.

Initially the Crossroads inhabitants resisted the move to Khayelitsha, as it is further from town and they preferred to be part of the agreement made with Dr. Koornhof. In the meantime a serious conflict had erupted between Ngxobongwana and Memani over which land belonged to whom, and the latter was driven out of Crossroads with his followers in 1984 in the first of a series of violent attacks. Mr Nongwe was now made the chairman of the remaining headmen by Mr. Ngxobongwana. The latter was also elected as chair of the

progressive Western Cape Civic Association, in recognition of the role he had played in progressive politics. Mali Hosa, one of the Crossroads headmen, agreed to move to Khayelitsha with his followers in 1985, and people were partly motivated to move because of the violence in Crossroads. By the end of May 1985 Site C was "full" with over 30 000 people having moved there from Crossroads, and others having come from backyard shacks in the other townships (Seekings, Graaff and Joubert, 1990:11). As people moved from Crossroads to Khayelitsha other people moved in and Crossroads became more overcrowded than ever.

In 1985 there was countrywide civil protest in an effort to "make the country ungovernable" and to enforce political change. A limited State of Emergency was extended to Cape Town in October. A Tswana-speaking police squad was brought to Crossroads, and people speculated that it would be to remove them forcibly to Khayelitsha, which led to fierce conflicts between the "comrades" aligned to the progressive organisations and the police. Sixteen people died and over 230 were seriously wounded. This was again followed by concessions, and people were told that Crossroads would be upgraded, which was celebrated as a political victory (Conradie, 1992:44).

In 1986 violence erupted in Crossroads again, but much more seriously. It had become clear that not all the people on the list could be accommodated in permanent housing in Crossroads, with the implication of loss of patronage and income to the headmen. Ngxobongwana and his Crossroads committees at this stage broke their ties with the progressive UDF affiliated organisations such as the Civic organisation, as they had "interfered in the domestic affairs of the people of Crossroads" (Goldstone, 1993, 2.3). Ngxobongwana himself was in the Ciskei in the Eastern Cape at this time, but Mali Hosa[24] and a group from Site C joined forces with his followers in Crossroads, donned white head bands, and called themselves the "witdoeke." They proceeded to align themselves to the apartheid police force, which had a repressive political agenda, and opposed the "comrades" in a series of armed battles. The "comrades" and other residents who supported the progressive groupings, which were front organisations for the ANC, fought the government forces and the "witdoeke". This therefore turned out to be a small-scale "civil war" fought between the apartheid government, aligned to some opportunistic supporters, and the pro-democracy forces aligned with Marxist groupings, but limited to one Cape Town township and complicated by the financial greed of the Crossroads headmen. Sixty people were killed and 65% of the shacks in the KTC camp (a part of Crossroads) were gutted in the conflict, leaving 70,000 people homeless (Cole, 1986:39; Goldstone, 1993; Seekings, Graaff and Joubert, 1990:12). Those who lost their homes spent many months in emergency camps, and the government insisted that they move to Khayelitsha. Some did and settled mostly in Green Point, a tent camp, but others resisted the move even under these circumstances.

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[24] According to the *Someleze* women the same Mr. Mali Hosa re-surfaced in the Khayelitsha political arena in October 2013, and although it is too soon to know how this will unfold, his role as a traditional leader in a modern democratic setting will be interesting to watch, especially in the light of his early history.

Some of the people from Crossroads who had settled in Site C moved on to Site B when that was opened in 1986,[25] as stands there provided a toilet and a tap per house, but many stayed in Site C as they had moved with others they knew. In the study conducted by Seekings, Graaff and Joubert (1990:35) 41% of their respondents had come to Site C from Crossroads, while 25% came from backyard shacks in the established townships, and 5% had lived in other squatter areas before. The rest came from the Boland, the wider Western Province area (5%), and from the Eastern Cape. According to this study, there was an estimated population of 45000 people in Site C by 1988 (Seekings, Graaff and Joubert, 1990:15). According to Ndingaye (2005) the Lingelethu West City Council reported in 1992 that there were 100 364 people in Site C by that time.

Labour legislation and regulations were also reformed during the last years of apartheid. Due to social, political and economic pressure Prime Minister P.W. Botha's government had initiated a series of reforms to its apartheid infrastructure. The more liberal recommendations of the Wiehahn commission on labour policy and productivity, published in 1979, contributed to this phase and also to what Terreblanche (2002:330) calls "various structural contradictions." The government implemented many of the Wiehahn recommendations, including the abolition of job reservation in the manufacturing sector and the easing of the restriction on the movement and training of African workers. This, and the history of protest and activism recounted here, eventually led to the abolition of influx control in 1986.

This period of protest and continuous political adjustment in the Western Cape should be seen in the light of the country-wide political violence in South Africa during the 1980's. The liberation movement had vowed not to turn back and for the largest part of the decade violent protest and boycott action prepared the way to the democratic transition. It could be viewed as South Africa's "Arab Spring" where determined resistance led to political democracy in 1994, but it was also a complex process in which landlessness and economic marginalisation added an element of desperation to this struggle. The dynamics of the Crossroads history impacted on the people of Khayelitsha and Site C in numerous ways, which will be explored below. It represents one of the most intense and traumatic periods in the long history of the confrontation between the Xhosa people and the colonial and later South African government forces, and remained a struggle in which land, labour and power were inter-related factors. In this struggle people experienced many formidable constraints, but they also experienced the victory of resistance which succeeded, and so on the whole do not see themselves as victims. Many think that their struggle should lead to a "better life" and their aspirations are closely aligned to this belief. The struggle for land, labour and power, however, is not over. This theme will be followed throughout the study.

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[25] Site B was opened for settlement shortly after Site C. These were both "site and service" areas in Khayelitsha, but in the case of Site C there were two households on a stand with one shared toilet and shared taps in the street, while Site B occupants had one house per stand with one toilet and one tap.

2.5 Khayelitsha: a new future?

Khayelitsha was founded in 1984, as was seen above, as a last effort of the apartheid government to accommodate people in Cape Town who had fled the economic destitution in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape. It was therefore designed as a dormitory city, in the apartheid "location" tradition, and has all the disadvantages of being far from the centre of town. At the same time it offered people land, permanence, and the possibility of setting up shelter in the Western Cape. It was initially planned to be much smaller, and has grown vastly beyond what was expected in the mid 1980's. It is now a huge, sprawling township between the N2 highway and the Muizenberg coastline, 32 kilometers from central Cape Town, and built on dunes and on a vlei area, with the result that it is often flooded and very often windblown and sandy.

The total population of Khayelitsha, according to the 2011 census, is 391 749. According to the Khayelitsha Development Forum this number is vastly under-counted. They use an estimate of 1.5 million people for the purposes of service delivery (Thompson and Conradie, 2010:1; Benu, 14.02.13). There are however 357 340 registered voters in the twelve wards of Khayelitsha.[26] 1.5 million seems overinflated, but at the same time, voters can only register from 18 years onwards, and this is a young population, so one would expect the population to be higher than 391 749, considering the number of registered voters. If one assumes that about 10% of residents might not be registered as voters, because of not having identity documents or for a range of other reasons, the adult population might be around 394 074. If one then takes into account that about 47% of the population is under 18 years old[27], a minimum estimate of the current population seems to be around 740 000.[28]

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[26] The IEC data containing this information was provided by Ms Leonora Jacobs, Electoral Operations Office of the Cape Town City Council, on 04.04.12.

[27] According to statssa 52% of the population is under 20 years of age, and so I assume that about 47% will be under 18 years of age.

[28] This might still be too low, as using the voter's roll is not a guaranteed way of ascertaining how many residents live in Khayelitsha, and as there might be more residents without identity documents. It is just likely to be the minimum number.

Informal housing in Site C, Khayelitsha. Photo taken by the author in 2006.

The area consists of different sub-sections, of which the first three were the core house area, now just known as Khayelitsha, and Site B and Site C. There are a few higher income areas, such as Mandela Park, Ilitha Park, Ikwezi Park and Mandalay, where many people own their houses and often have a housing subsidy, and then many more areas where the inhabitants are often unemployed and poor, such as Makaza, Harare, Site C and Kuyasa. In total there are 118 810 dwellings in Khayelitsha, of which 50,835 are built of brick or cement, and 40 276 are shacks, made of corrugated iron, wood and plastic. The rest comprise of different kinds of housing, such as tents, traditional huts and other structures.[29] Unemployment is high, as can be seen in the table below. In total, 108 114 people in the age group which can be employed are in formal or informal employment, while 163 838 in that age group are not employed.

Table 1: Employment and unemployment in Khayelitsha

	In the formal sector	In the informal sector	Private household	Do not know	Unspecified	Not applicable
Employed	76652	14521	16941	2980	-	-
Unemployed	-	-	-	-	-	68145
Discouraged work-seeker	-	-	-	-	-	11201
Other not economically active	-	-	-	-	-	84553
Age less than 15 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not applicable	666	103	129	34	-	115825

(Source: Census 2011, www.statssa.gov.za) (Accesed 24 June, 2013).

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[29] www.statssa.gov.za

Income is accordingly low, as can be seen below (Census 2011, www.statssa.gov.za) (Accessed 24 June, 2013).

Table 2: Monthly household income categories, Khayelitsha

Monthly household income categories	Number of people
No income	172420
R 1 - R 400	65376
R 401 - R 800	13102
R 801 - R 1 600	39393
R 1 601 - R 3 200	39620
R 3 201 - R 6 400	15438
R 6 401 - R 12 800	7039
R 12 801 - R 25 600	2543
R 25 601 - R 51 200	691
R 51 201 - R 102 400	48
R 102 401 - R 204 800	96
R 204 801 or more	59
Unspecified	35334
Not applicable	591
Grand Total	**391749**

The extremely high percentage of economically inactive people is a characteristic of Khayelitsha and other similar urban and rural townships in South Africa. This is the result of the history of South Africa described above, and of the systematic destruction of indigenous economic systems, in order for people to be used as farm and mine labourers. Now that agriculture and mining has declined, there is an economic vacuum and very high unemployment.

Services are also poor, and many people are dissatisfied with this (Thompson, Nleya and Africa, 2011:4). A large percentage of people still do not have access to toilets, and this issue is often used in political debates around election times.[30] Roads and infrastructure are good, on the whole, and refuse removal is done by community members through the public works scheme, and also usually works well. Electricity is mostly bought on a pre-paid basis, although many people still attempt to get their power from an existing source by means of illegal wiring, as can be seen on the photo – a dangerous but popular custom.

School standards are a problem, and many parents send their children to schools in other areas, where they get a slightly better education and where they also learn English from the start. There are about forty-six schools in Khayelitsha, one of which is the Centre of Science

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[30] Protests about inadequate toilet facilities have been particularly strong in 2013, with protesters throwing human waste in public places – a protest dubbed *pota-pota* by the inhabitants (News24, 28.08.13).

and Technology (COSAT). This school was founded by the director of Falsebay College, in an effort to improve the standard of schooling in the area, and in 2011 it was the first township school to be in the top ten schools in the Western Cape when it achieved the ninth overall position. This was a result of their 100% pass rate in the 2011 National Senior Certificate examinations. Seventy nine percent of the 2011 candidates obtained access to university and 98.6% passed mathematics.[31] This is in very sharp contrast to most other schools in the area, where classes are large, teachers often are not at school when they should be, and performance is poor. As a result of poor education access to employment is limited. Women often work as domestic or industrial cleaners, child care assistants, or carers in old age homes, where they compete with women from poorer Coloured areas. Many people run micro-level businesses for a livelihood, and there is a small formal market in Site C, but they market their goods in a community where money is scarce, and it is hard to grow a business. In a recent study it was found that crime, risk and the lack of start-up capital constrain those who consider running a small business in Khayelitsha (Cichello, Almeleh, Mncube and Oosthuizen, 2011). An additional impediment that developed in recent years is the fact that Somali traders have captured the market for *spaza* shops (small shops in peoples' homes) as they are able to buy collectively, and therefore sell more cheaply. Township *spaza* shops previously survived by a system where all sold at the same price, but the Somali traders are able to undercut this system and have virtually captured the market (Charman, Petersen and Piper, 2011).

Citizens of Khayelitsha were asked to mention the three most important problems in South Africa in the ACCEDE survey. Housing was seen as the most important problem (72%) and job creation and unemployment as the second most important, with 70% of respondents selecting this. In the third place, crime and safety was selected by 41% (Thompson, Nleya and Africa, 2011:4). According to a recent police report, murder, car highjacking, assault, robbery, sexual crimes, culpable homicide and kidnapping had all decreased considerably since 2003, but the figures for these crimes are still comparatively high. Drug-related crimes have particularly increased over the period.[32] SANCO has volunteer groups who do street patrols, and this helps in curbing crime. VPUU, a German funded programme, uses different strategies to assist in crime fighting, of which the most important is to design areas, open spaces and buildings in such a way that crime is more difficult to commit. In 2013 it has however been reported that citizens of Khayelitsha had repeatedly taken the law into their own hands, and had in five different cases "necklaced"[33] people they suspected of being involved in criminal activity, because they did not believe that the police would take action.[34] Vigilante justice is not new in the area, but seems to be on the increase. Gang activity also

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[31] www.designinfestation.com
[32] www.saps.gov.za/statistics/reports/crimestats/2011/.../khayelitsha.pdf

[33] Necklacing is a rather horrific strategy which was developed during the anti-apartheid struggle, where suspected "collaborators" would be put to death by lighting a fire in a car tyre which would be placed around the person's neck.
[34] http://westcapenews.com/?p=4324

seems to be on the increase, according to our key informants in the area. The socio-economic problems experienced by Khayelitsha citizens are closely linked to the crime rate. Because many young people have no hope to enter the formal market, the black market offers a different route. The socio-political infrastructure of Khayelitsha is interesting as it provides for an unusual degree of participation. With the achievement of democracy and access to political power in 1994, the question however has to be asked whether these structures afford the citizens of Khayelitsha access to real political voice and power.

Diagram 1: Civic & Socio-Political Structures in Khayelitsha (Adapted from Thompson and Conradie, 2010, and Thompson and Conradie, 2011)
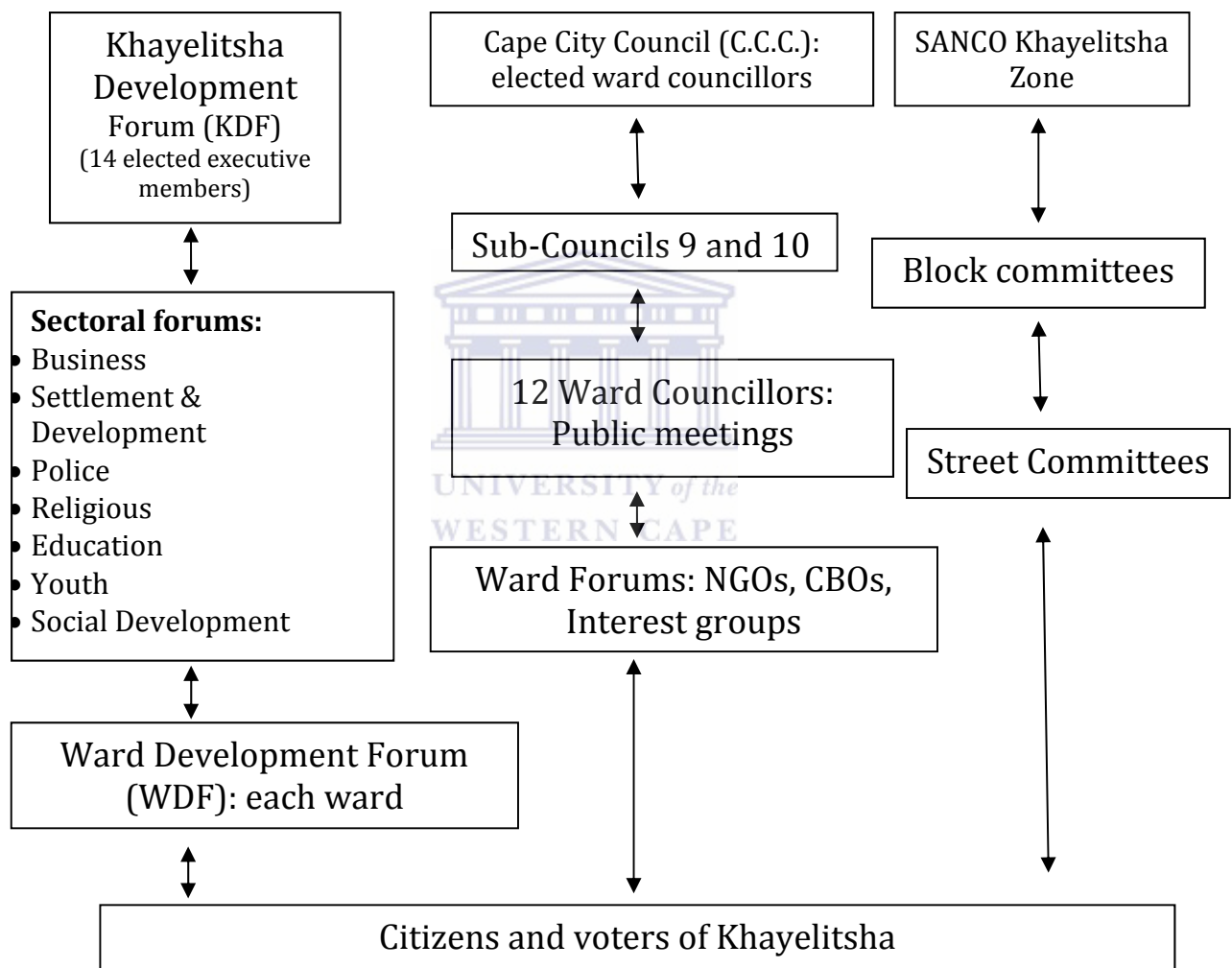
As can be seen from the above diagram, the citizens of Khayelitsha have three different opportunities to involve themselves in the local governance of their area. In the middle the Cape City Council represents the local and provincial government, which is in the hands of the opposition, the Democratic Alliance, in the Western Cape. There are two sub-council offices in Khayelitsha, for sub-councils 9 and 10, and these manage and organise the work and responsibilities of the twelve ward councillors which had been elected for Khayelitsha. (Some ward councillors are elected in a local election, and others are indirectly elected from a

list if their party gained a certain number of votes.) The councillors appoint people who have specialist knowledge to key forums on health, gender, etc. and they are again responsible for ensuring broader participation when issues concerning their portfolio come up for discussion and decision-making. The most interesting aspect of this leg is however that the councillors call public meetings whenever a contentious issue such as public works opportunities arises, and these issues are then discussed and deliberated in well attended public forums. This does not mean that everybody is always satisfied with the outcome or with the process, which is often seen to favour some, but people who want to be involved do attend these meetings. In a 2012 ACCEDE survey with 300 randomly selected respondents from Khayelitsha, 59% of the respondents attend these public discussions regularly, while an additional 18% have done so once or twice (Thompson, Conradie and Tsolekile, forthcoming).

The organisation on the left of the diagram, the KDF, is likewise an interesting political forum and one which plays a unique role in this area. When it became clear to some of the Khayelitsha leaders in 1993 that groups with widely different political perceptions and histories had to be integrated into a new township, they formed a coordinating body, the KDF, which was eventually constituted in 1994. This body is well respected amongst most leaders in Khayelitsha, although we have found that many ordinary people do not know about it. It has a strong a-political stance, which they consider necessary for equitable services and for real democracy. Some of our respondents have however informed us that they do not think this is really so, and that everybody knows who supports which party and that this plays a role in how decisions are made. The KDF is nevertheless well respected by the Cape City Council, and it is usually consulted and supported in its leadership role in the area concerning its main function, the reconstruction and development needs of the citizens of Khayelitsha (www.kdf.org.za). The KDF therefore presents Khayelitsha citizens with another opportunity to participate in community activities and decisions, and this is well utilised.

The third opportunity for participation is probably the best utilised by ordinary citizens, namely the activities of the SANCO street committees, which have been active in the area since its inception. SANCO functioned as one of the front organisations for the ANC during the apartheid struggle, as described earlier, and the Street Committees were useful and important vehicles for the transmission of information when meetings could not be held. When SANCO decided to become affiliated to the ANC in the post-1994 period, it lost its independence and ability to determine its own political position, but gained access to power and influence. There now however seems to be intense leadership rivalry, probably because leaders have potential access to political positions at higher levels, and this conflict also affects the organisational structures on the ground (Thompson and Conradie, 2010; Thompson and Conradie, 2011a; Thompson and Conradie, 2011b).

In the 2102 ACCEDE study quoted above 66% of respondents nevertheless reported that they often attend street committee meetings, and a further 18% have attended these once or twice (Thompson, Conradie and Tsolekile, forthcoming). This is a high figure for political participation, and illustrates the value of the street committee structures, where people raise a range of issues which are brought forward from smaller meetings between households. This

discussion forum is however not directly linked to the political decision making process, which means that people are invited to talk without seeing any follow-through of their inputs, which leads to frustration.

Another key finding is that between 75% and 80% of respondents are dissatisfied with how well the ward councillor handles a range of political tasks, or how well government deals with problems, while a small percentage of respondents, between 20 and 25%, feel very positive about the ward councillor and about government's role in dealing with problems. This, together with qualitative research findings suggest to us that a small group of people are involved in the political life of the area and feel satisfied with these opportunities, while the majority of people are not involved and feel dissatisfied. Related to this is the fact that 90% of respondents believe that no other party could have done a better job of running the country, and yet 69% of the Khayelitsha respondents "are not at all satisfied" or "not very satisfied" with democracy. These findings suggest dissatisfaction but a lack of political alternatives. [35] The highest dissatisfaction is felt about the allocation of public works opportunities by the ward councillor, which again emphasises the importance of economic survival in this area (Thompson, Conradie and Tsolekile, forthcoming).

It has to be noted that political participation in Khayelitsha is a complex process. The structures on the diagram function reasonably well, within the parameters discussed above. However, one has to keep in mind that the turbulent history of the Site C inhabitants occurred relatively recently and is still present, albeit just beneath the surface. Incidents of unexpected aggression and violence suggest that historical alliances, so strong that they had led to a war-like situation, are still covertly present in current interactions.

Most Khayelitsha citizens still have strong bonds with the Eastern Cape, and are very deeply linked to the rural areas, in an urban-rural continuum which rests on formal and informal networks and on kinship linkages. These perform a range of functions in peoples' lives, including providing them with informal social protection and care networks (Du Toit and Neves, 2009a; Du Toit and Neves, 2009b). Cultural practices such as initiations and family funerals are also mostly performed in the rural area, and people will also sometimes go to the rural area for physical and mental healing by traditional healers, although all of these ceremonies are also conducted in Khayelitsha itself as well. On the whole most of Khayelitsha's inhabitants seem to be positively identified with the area, although much remains to be done to deal with pervasive poverty and lack of development.

The question remains why large numbers of people continue to migrate to an area where they are unlikely to get employment, where housing and other services are often not what they expect, where schooling is poor and crime is high, and from where they choose to return to a far-off rural area for cultural activities and for retirement. The answer probably lies partly in

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[35] This is in line with the findings of Susan Booysen (2007).

the virtual collapse of the Eastern Cape Province, where the "homeland" administration was guilty of maladministration and corruption in the pre-1990 period, and where the provincial bureaucracy has continued this trend post-1994 (Chipkin, 2012), with the result that virtually all service delivery is currently at risk (Ruiters, 2011). Combined with the fact that rural land had become too limited for successful farming, life in Khayelitsha, however constrained one's choices there, is still preferable to most of these migrants.

This conclusion is confirmed by Yu and Nieftagodien (2008) in their paper on poverty and migration in the Khayelitsha/Mitchells Plain/Gugulethu/Langa area.[36] They show that the percentage of poverty in the Eastern Cape is the highest in South Africa, while the percentage in the Western Cape is lowest. The largest set of ultra-poor in the country is found in the Eastern Cape with 34% of inhabitants having an annual per capita income of between R35 and R1515. This group is dominated by African rural women who are unskilled for the labour market and unemployed. Their main reason for migration is therefore to escape grinding poverty. Seventy one percent of female headed households in the Eastern Cape are poor, while only 21% of similar households in the Western Cape are poor. Because of low wages 38% of the poor are employed, but they are obviously less at risk than the unemployed (Yu and Nieftagodien, 2008:2-39).[37]

Before this chapter is concluded one last theme must be attended to. Anthropologists sometimes depicted the migration of people to urban areas, whether temporary or permanent, as stark and discrete processes. Others have criticised this interpretation. Because the analysis in the thesis will be influenced by these different anthropological approaches, it is important to take note of the main trends in these debates.

2.6 The interpretation of culture in migration studies

As Magubane (2010) maintained, the subjugation of the Xhosa people over the last two centuries has not weakened their cultural beliefs, and most of the women in the study confirmed that their own culture has deep meaning for them, even though their urban lifestyle has been influenced by western ideas. To support the analysis of culture in the dissertation, I shall therefore now briefly examine theoretical shifts in how culture has been interpreted, and show how these shifts occur in a number of key studies on the "Xhosa in town". I do not intend to give a comprehensive overview of studies on the culture of the Xhosa in urban areas, or to do a wide-ranging review of the theorisation of culture, but rather to show how this theoretical shift occurred, and to ask how that would influence the interpretation of culture in this dissertation.

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[36] Because this study deals with a larger area than Khayelitsha only, and includes the Coloured area Mitchells Plain, it is only used to frame the poverty-migration relationship between the Eastern Cape and the Western Cape.

[37] The data set which was used for this study is the LFS/IES panel study of 2000, but conditions have not changed dramatically since then.

For the purpose of the analysis of culture here it is necessary to ask how culture might be seen within the frame of a capability analysis. Sen says of culture and tradition that if these would oppose development, it would be up to the people involved to "face and assess" whether they want to maintain their traditional practices or choose for development (Sen, 1999:31). As development should be *human* development, these issues should not be contradictory (*Ibid*:144). Moreover, an open view of culture, seen as not homogeneous and not frozen in time or isolated in space, will best inform our investigations (Sen, 2004:43-44). With these normative assumptions as a basis for the analysis of culture, I shall first examine the ways in which the theoretical concept of culture has changed in recent times.

2.6.1 Changes in the theorisation of culture

The older meaning of culture, still retained in the term 'high culture' (Goodall, 1995), is associated with the cultivation of the mind, in the same way that fields are cultivated. Elizabeth Gaskell writes in her novel "North and South" (1855) that the priest's family is socially isolated in the village where they live: "Helstone was at some distance from any neighbours of their own standard of cultivation." Class, education and exposure to 'the arts' enabled this family to achieve such 'cultivation', and the status it brought them in mid-19th century England. It was also associated with the adherence to specific forms of social conduct, language, lifestyle and manners. Trade, manufacturing and manual labour was seen as 'uncultured' (Schech and Haggis, 2002:16-17). These ideas were spread throughout the world in the process of colonisation, and what had been a strong class system in Britain and other colonising powers often became a fierce stigmatisation of the 'other' in the colonies (Magubane, 2004). 'High culture' was associated with the West, and traditional culture with developing countries (Escobar, 1997:85; Schech and Haggis, 2000:22-26, 37). In some cases this led to systems of "arrogance and inhumanity" such as holocausts (Gasper, 2006:99), as was also seen in the history of the Xhosa people discussed earlier in this chapter.

In anthropological analysis this older view of culture was associated with traditional ways of living, which were often stigmatised and seen as backward (Kriel, 1984:5). "The critique of the culture concept in anthropology has, as virtually every anthropologist knows by now, centered primarily (though not exclusively) around the problem of essentialism. Classical anthropology tended to portray groups of people as having "a culture," as being in the grip of that culture, and as acting in ways which could be explained largely by reference to that culture" (Ortner, 2006:12). The task of the anthropologist was then to discover the ways in which such "culture" determined and gave meaning to activities and behaviour. Although this use of culture was developed in an effort to overcome the dangers of racial analysis, it very often led to serious stereotyping (Schech and Haggis, 2000:22; Ortner, 2006:12).

The shift to a more open and inclusive view of culture came as a result of three theoretical trends. Firstly there was a "power shift" as a result of the work of Raymond Williams, who wrote about culture as "the whole way of life" of a social group (Schech and Haggis, 2000:26), through the work of Michel Foucault on the underlying power dynamics in society (Smart, 1985), and through the ideas of James Scott (1979; 1985). The work of these scholars helped to show how problematic issues such as gender, racial and colonial stigmatisation

were rooted in social practices. Gramsci had also had a considerable influence on these theorists of power, and among the ideas which had been integrated into their theories is the notion that hegemony is never complete – individuals can always protest in some way or another (Ortner, 2006:3-4). Secondly, there was a "historic turn," "a broad movement to historicise work in the social sciences and thus to move beyond the static frameworks that had carried over into practice theory from functionalism" (Otner, 2006:3). Finally there was a series of contributions on the reinterpretation of culture, into which the previous two notions were integrated. Culture was now seen as imperfect social reproduction, where power and domination is present, but incomplete, and full of contestation and ambiguity. It was no longer seen as different from the political and economic spheres of society, but as the whole of society, with all its elements. It was also not seen as fixed, but as ever-changing and fluid – in short, as a much more open subject (Gupta and Ferguson, 2001:1-29; Ortner, 2006: 3-4; Schech and Haggis, 2000:26-27).

Together with this shift came the idea that some aspects of the colonial tradition in Africa had not emerged from participating people, but had been invented by colonial forces, to reinforce the notion of colonial rule and the superiority of the imperial tradition. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983) point out that many of the proud traditions which are found in Africa today were colonial imports intended as strategies to create loyalty to the colonial powers. The ways in which the colonial powers involved in the modernisation of colonies manipulated the notion of culture contributed to the discrediting of the older approach.

Arjun Appadurai has written three papers on new perspectives in the study of culture, all of which contribute to a new direction in social anthropology. The first is a paper on "Putting hierarchy into its place" (Appadurai, 1988), in which he argues against essentialist theory, which attempts to discover essential characteristics of groups of people which can then be universalised. He examines the use of the word "natives" in anthropology, where it has come to mean "prisoners of their mode of thought" (Appadurai, 1988:37), and argues that there are no groups of people in the world who are completely isolated in this way. The old theory, says Appadurai, has three tendencies, which need to be overcome: to *essentialize*, to *exoticize*, and to *totalize* (Appadurai, 1988:41). In the next paper he suggests new areas of cultural investigation. He examines disjunctures in the global cultural economy, where he suggests five key areas of investigation, namely *ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes,* and *ideoscapes* (Appadurai, 2000). This entails the probing of questions on culture and ethnicity, media, technology, financial flows, and political ideas, of which the most important is that of *democracy* and its attendant forms. The third is the paper on the *capacity to aspire* which this study is based on, and which will be discussed in chapter four. In this last paper he steers culture away from the traditional, and in the direction of economic aspirations and engagement, in which social movements also play a vital role (Appadurai, 2004). Appdurai thus played a major role in the re-imagining of cultural studies.

I shall now explore some of the main anthropological studies that have been done on Xhosa people and the migration between rural and urban areas, as well as selected debates which surround these studies.

2.6.2 "The Xhosa in Town"

The series known as the "Xhosa in town" is possibly the major anthropological exploration of the migration patterns of the Xhosa people, and of people's perceptions and attitudes about rural and urban life, together with the classical study "Reaction to Conquest" by Monica Hunter (1936). These studies live on in the South African debates, and form a core in discussions on this subject.

The "Xhosa in town" series consist firstly of "The Blackman's Portion" by Reader (1961), describing the history of East London, the closest industrial city to the rural areas of the Eastern Cape, as well as the demography and social problems associated with migration. The second volume, "Townsmen or Tribesmen: conservatism and the process of urbanisation in a South African city" by Philip Mayer (1961), the senior researcher who worked with his wife, Iona Mayer, is the most important of the three studies, as it formulates the theoretical constructs on which the series is based. He distinguishes three groups of people: the "red" people, or those who adhere to a strongly traditional way of life, the "school" people, or those who have become westernised, and those in-between. The field of research is clearly demarcated: "This book deals with migrant life in East London, but not primarily with the migrants' adjustment to the white world as such: i.e., not mainly with race relations, work situations or the contacts between tribal and white people's expectations" (Mayer, 1961:2). The third study is on "The second generation" (Pauw, 1963) and describes the mix between westernised and traditional customs which people adhere to after having been in an urban area for one generation.

The three studies present a wealth of information on the process of migration and acculturation. They therefore make a very valuable contribution to this subject, a generation after Monica Hunter's classic study "Reaction to Conquest" (1961), first published in 1936. Although there are similarities in "The Xhosa in Town" studies and Hunter's work, there are however important differences in the way in which they are approached. Most importantly, Monica Hunter writes her study from the perspective of South African society as a whole, and emphasises the ways in which both black and white people have been influenced by their mutual contact and exposure (Hunter, 1961:1-14). Bernard Magubane, the renowned South African anthropologist-in-exile, is particularly critical of the "Xhosa in town" studies (1973:1706) in this regard. He shows how they fail to present the migrating Xhosa people in the context of their forced incorporation into the South African economy and society. "By focusing their lenses on norms of the African "half," with complete disregard of the larger structure, Mayer and Pauw divorce the social behaviour of Africans from the objectively shaped system of social relations. This, of course, strips the problem of the African in South African towns of its economic, political, class, moral, and spiritual meaning" (Magubane, 1973:1708). Magubane also argues that this analysis freezes individuals in time and space, with no sense that they have a past or a future. Their feelings about their "partially destroyed culture," about their political submission and lack of voice, and their humiliation in the country of their birth are furthermore not touched on (*Ibid:*1706, 1710). Lastly these studies use terminology which can be considered racist; words such as 'red', 'school', 'tribe',

'civilised', 'native' and 'Bantu' are all words which came out of the apartheid ideology and which are freely used here (Magubane, 1973:1709).[38] Magubane suggests that the "Xhosa in town" studies support the ideology of apartheid. "The falsity of South Africa lies in its attempt to ossify Africans in archaic "tribal" moulds under hereditary rulers instead of accepting them as full citizens of the South African state" (*Ibid:*1714).

Magubane was not the only scholar to attack the "Xhosa in town" series, and especially the Mayers. Mafeje (1971) likewise thought that the division of Xhosa speakers into two discrete groups, the believers and the unbelievers, was artificial. Furthermore, both Magubane and Mafeje "strongly objected to what they saw as an assertion that modernising Africans in towns were just mimicking and imitating the culture of their oppressors rather than creating something uniquely African, their own version of modernity that inspired their struggles for independence and freedom" (Bank, 2011:8). A whole range of liberal and Marxist scholars participated in this critique, also partially based on the reassessment of social anthropology discussed above. The critique was largely based on the division of people into two or three essential categories, which vastly underestimated the complexity of identity formation in the setting of the 1950's, which was a valid criticism (Bank, 2011:36).

The Mayers found the personal nature of the criticism, and the political claim that they were supporting the apartheid state, devastating. Philip Mayer was a German Jew who had fled the holocaust to live in Britain and then in Grahamstown, and who had had to deal with his own experiences of racial discrimination. He rewrote his findings in a 1980 paper, using Althusser to analyse the long-term political resistance patterns among the 'red' and the 'school' Xhosa, but not retracting his basic thesis. The Mayers returned to England where Philip Mayer died in 1994 (Bank, 2011:10).

The study of the "Xhosa in town" was eventually taken further by Leslie Bank (2011), in a study undertaken between 1995 and 2005. Bank did not so much attempt to study migration, but rather "the changing city itself and … townships as complex spaces of creativity, social formation and struggle in their own right" (Bank, 2011:7). He revisits the early trilogy, and comes to the conclusion that 'red' and 'school' people were real categories, especially in the earlier period, but confirms Mafeje's statement that the Mayers' had made too much of the difference and had in fact reified the category of 'red' (Bank, 2011:235-237). While the earlier study was done after a period of racial violence in the city, and mostly in a formalistic way by trained interviewers, Bank was able to go where he wanted to, with easy access to *shebeens*,[39] social clubs and other social meeting places, also after hours. His study is thus very different, more sophisticated and much more nuanced, while he also succeeds in interpreting his material in the light of the theoretical knowledge and experience which anthropologists had gained since the 1960's. This study will be used as one of a number of resources for the interpretation of cultural material in the fieldwork.

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[38] The complex issue of identity and how it is named and framed in Africa is discussed in Bekker *et al* (2001), Boonzaaier and Sharp (1988), Heelas, Lash and Morris (Eds) (1996), and Magubane (2004), amongst others.
[39] Local drinking places in townships

Two further studies on the nature of the rural-urban continuum will be used in a similar way. The first is *In search of South Africa's second economy* (Du Toit and Neves, 2007). In this important paper the relationship between urban and rural economic engagement is studied by means of fieldwork in the light of some of the historical tendencies described in chapter two. The authors find that different forms of engagement in the economy, such as formal and informal employment, rural and urban asset collection, multiple income sources for households, and other forms are complexly interrelated, and that the South African economy presents as unitary and heterogeneous. A second work by Du Toit and Neves (2008) deals with *Informal social protection in post-apartheid migrant networks: vulnerability, social networks and reciprocal exchange in the Eastern and Western Cape, South Africa*. The authors assess the impact of the social grant system within the social networks of 'hybrid' livelihood systems within the urban-rural continuum, and the ways in which people rely on 'care chains' supported by women. Both of these studies emphasise the porous nature of the dividing lines between 'rural' and 'urban' and the authors speak of a continuum of influences, rather than of a discrete division. These papers therefore speak very directly to the conditions experienced by the women in Khayelitsha who are discussed in this dissertation.

In the section on culture I traced some of the recent changes in the theorisation of culture. These shifted from being mainly descriptions of ethnicity, of colonial 'subjects' within largely traditional settings, to analysing the complex life-situations of citizens of formerly colonised areas, who are now engaged in developing political and economic autonomy in their transforming countries (Mamdani, 1996). Some of the ways in which these debates also played out in studies on Xhosa migration and urbanisation were lastly reviewed.

2.7 Discussion and conclusion

The thousands of people who moved to Khayelitsha in the 1980's and 1990's, and those who continue to do so at present, consist largely of those who had not managed to find employment after their subsistence livelihoods had been undermined over time by deliberate policies. In the course of the last two hundred years the Xhosa people had gradually lost their political power, their land and ready access to labour, and many of them find themselves economically marginalized. According to Seekings and Nattrass, in 1993 41% of the South African population was in the lowest income group (Seekings and Nattrass, 2005:254); by the turn of the 21st century more than half the people of working age in South Africa were unemployed (Nattrass and Seekings, 2010:2). The proletarianisation of this sector of society had an adverse outcome when the mining sector became smaller (Banerjee et al, 2006b: 54). At the same time industrialisation strategies for large scale employment of unskilled workers was never a real possibility in the new South Africa due to the structural features of the economy since the 1970's (Gelb, 2003). When people from Eastern Cape villages come to Cape Town they expect to get employment in occupations on the edge of the market, for instance as safety guards in the dangerous security sector, or in short-term public works jobs, such as street cleaning. Many also sell small quantities of goods in a very competitive market. The more sophisticated skilled employment sector is very difficult to access and the dual economy is still a reality in South Africa, after it had been deliberately created over a period

of more than a century.[40] Social and economic exclusion is not absolute, as there are many families who have members in the formal sector who assist them in material and other ways (Du Toit and Neves, 2009a), but at the same time it exists.

Although employment is hard to obtain, another important reason for migration to Cape Town is that services are better in the Western Cape, in the form of housing, medical services, schools and municipal services, such as water and electricity. This will also be kept in mind in the analysis of the findings of this study.

For the women in the research group who are a part of the unemployed sector, the possibility exists that their deliberately induced deprivation described in this chapter might have influenced the extent to which they are able to aspire and engage their agency to realise such aspirations. It is the purpose of this study to discover whether they want to overcome this exclusion and to what extent these barriers can be overcome by aspirations, capabilities and agency. The next theme in this investigation is to review the capability approach, and the tools which that approach offers for such an assessment.

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[40] Former president Thabo Mbeki wanted to use the concept in policy formation, but COSATU protested that it might entrench it for the foreseeable future.

Chapter three
The capability approach and the human development approach

In this chapter I shall introduce some of the main literature on the capability approach, the theoretical approach which will be used in this study. The conceptual framework of the capability approach will firstly be discussed, mainly as Amartya Sen developed it. The reason for choosing Sen's version for this study is that the basic question of the research deals with the impact of aspirations and agency on capabilities, and thus with the contextual assessment of capabilities as opportunities, which Sen favours. As Nussbaum's version of the approach will be referred to in the analysis, the differences between the two versions will be pointed out. The literature on the measurement of functionings and capabilities will be summarised and discussed, with brief reference to individualism in the capability approach. The phenomenon of adaptation and the uses of agency in the approach will conclude the theoretical literature review. I shall also look at literature on some development projects which have used the approach.

The literature reviewed will be broadly limited to that which will be relevant for this study, which means sources which deal with the assessment of whether the articulation of and attempts to realise one's aspirations could increase one's capabilities, in a context of entrenched poverty such as Site C, Khayelitsha. In the previous chapter the history and context of the women who participated in the study was described and discussed. The question was asked whether the fact that the respondents were socially and economically excluded as a result of deliberate colonial and apartheid policies might have an impact on how they would be able to address their own aspirations. I shall now explore the nature of the capability approach and the tools and techniques it offers to assess whether the aspirations of the women in this study have led to increased capabilities.

Before that can be done it is necessary to be clear about the relationship between the capability approach and the human development approach. Some see these approaches as similar and other scholars see them as related but different. As the capability approach will be the theoretical approach used for the analysis of the study, it is important to be clear about how these two approaches can be used, and about how I shall use them.

3.1 The relationship between the capability approach and the human development approach

I shall first briefly examine the capability approach and then the human development approach in order to be able to address the question whether they are parts of the same approach or whether they are different approaches. Sen (2009:16) sees the *capability approach* as a discipline which focusses on the *evaluation* of achievements (functionings), and freedoms (capabilities) to do the things a person has reason to value. Nussbaum (2011:18) prefers the term "capabilities approach" to emphasise that the dimensions which are assessed are plural and distinct. Nussbuam has developed the capabilities approach for theorising about justice in a pluralistic society. For those purposes she has developed a list of capabilities that each society owes to its citizens, yet in the literature Nussbaums' list of

capabilities is also used for other purposes than theorising about justice, including for empirical quality of life assessements. The capability approach can be used in a narrow way, to achieve the goals set out here, or in a broader way, for instance to also allow for a detailed exploration of how aspects such as agency, efficiency or procedural fairness operate (Robeyns, 2011a).

Robeyns (2011b) suggests that it might also be useful to take a step back and to describe the capability approach more generally in terms of its two normative claims, namely "first, the claim that the freedom to achieve well-being is of primary moral importance, and second, that freedom to achieve well-being is to be understood in terms of people's capabilities, that is, their real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value." This would arguably offer a formulation which captures both Sen and Nussbaum's approaches, but could additionally allow for a much broader application of the capability approach than that formulated by the two founding scholars, such as "social criticism, ethnographic studies, policy design in the area of family policies in welfare states, or even - potentially - as part of the design of a revolutionary blueprint of a post-capitalist economic system…To my mind, the capability approach should be defined in more general and abstract terms, as a theory with a scope potentially as wide reaching as utilitiarianism. Philosophers should consider thinking of the capability approach as 'capabilitarianism'" (Robeyns (2011b). In these terms, 'capabilitarianism' would then be a broad philosophical paradigm which could potentially challenge utilitarianism, based on the normative claim of universal well-being, to be understood in terms of capabilities.

The *human development approach*, initiated by Mahbub ul Haq, can be seen as an approach which aims at providing a *policy framework* for development based on human development dimensions and indicators. Money, economic growth and the role of "the market" is seen as crucially important, but as instruments, not as ends. The redistributive role of governments is therefore seen as a crucial element in development, and social policies as a key instrument to bring about development and equity. Amartya Sen was one of the scholars who agreed to assist in this formulation, and he was instrumental in shaping the approach, with others, by means of the tools and techniques of the capability approach. Fukuda-Parr (2005:303) describes the human development approach as "the operationalization of Sen's ideas on capabilities." However, other scholars with other theoretical perspectives, such as the basic needs approach, also played a role in this process (Fukuda-Parr and Kumar, 2003).

Richard Jolly (2003:90) sees the human development approach as an alternative and robust paradigm, which he contrasts to the neo-liberal paradigm. Fukuda-Parr (2005:312-314) builds on this distinction and contrasts the Washington Consensus to the "New York Consensus", based on the fact that many U. N. agreements reflect the following human development principles:
- Priority to social goals such as health and education
- Economic growth to generate resources for human development
- Political and social reforms towards greater democracy, human rights, participation and autonomy

- Equity with regards to the marginalized and women
- Global policy and institutional reforms for equal access to poorer countries.

Haq also saw the initiative as a radical and new point of departure, and also called human development a new paradigm (Haq, 2003:17). Alkire (2005:17) is a strong supporter of the idea that a new paradigm needs to be constructed: "The key excitement about the capability approach is that it goes beyond the relentless criticism of income to propose an alternative space in which to conceptualize both poverty reduction and justice…The hope is that further elaboration of this objective will build into an alternative paradigm, an alternative way of identifying and evaluating intermediary actions…that might contribute to the objective". The human development approach can therefore be presented as an ideological counter-force to the dominant market ideology, which produces social and economic policy formulation based on largely monetary considerations.

The impact of the human development approach, with the capability approach as its conceptual component, has especially become clear in recent years. German poverty and wealth reports are using the approach as framework (Arndt and Volkert, 2011), while the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Britain are doing so too (Alkire *et al*, 2009). Burd-Sharps et al (2008) have done the human development "measure of America" for the US Human Development Report of 2009/9, Chiappero-Martinetti and Moroni (2007) did a human development assessment of poverty in Italy, and China has a development approach which translates to the "human development approach" (Alkire and Deneulin, 2009:7).

This prepares the ground for the question whether the capability approach and the human development approach really form one new approach or not. Alkire and Deneulin (2009:22) use the two phrases in one single term: the human development and capability approach, as does Nussbaum (2011:17-18). Robeyns (2011c) on the other hand sees the two approaches as inter-related and mutually beneficial but essentially different. She describes the capability approach as "a broad normative framework for the evaluation and assessment of individual well-being and social arrangements, the design of policies, and proposals about change in society" (Robeyns, 2005:94), while the human development approach deals *inter alia* with policy design at macro level, as in the case of the Human Development reports (Robeyns, 2010:234). She also argues that the question of whether one sees these two approaches as one hinges on whether one subscribes to a narrow or a broad understanding of the capability approach. If one uses a narrow approach, one would support Sen's view that the capability approach is one of the components of the human development approach. If one uses the capability approach in a broad way, as Alkire and Denuelin do, that would suggest the merging of the two approaches. Robeyns therefore proposes that the human development approach be used as an alternative framework or paradigm to oppose the neo-liberal model, and that the capability approach be used for more detailed and in-depth theoretical work that does not necessarily have the full range of normative and ideological commitments that the human development approach has (Robeyns, 2011c).

There is therefore not unanimity in how this issue is seen. For the purposes of this dissertation I shall see the capability approach as the theoretical approach which facilitates capability and well-being assessments, and the human development approach as a strongly related but different approach, which informs people-centred policies. The latter can and should be used as a new paradigm to inform human development policies in an increasingly unequal world, based on an exploitative form of capitalism (Chang, 2010). In the new paradigm 'capabilitarianism' could thus replace utilitarianism, while the human development approach would replace the neo-liberal approach.

Having reviewed the relationship between the capability approach and human development, I shall discuss the choice of the capability approach for this study.

3.2 The capability approach as theoretical framework for this study
3.2.1 Introduction

The first question to address is whether the capability approach, primarily as Sen developed it, is a valid approach for this study. The capability approach was chosen because its underlying premises are in line with the foundational ideas of the research programme undertaken on aspirations, agency and capabilities. The notion that development is the freedom of an individual to choose between alternative opportunity sets that would again increase her future opportunities, and allow her to live a valued life, is applied here in a micro setting. The choice of certain aspirations that one would deliberately attempt to realise, can therefore be said to represent the deliberate choice by the participating women of those functionings that they want to see realised in their lives, and hence that they find valuable. A second reason for using the approach is Sen's emphasis on agency as a central concept and also as a central normative concern. Making an attempt to realise one's aspirations must involve agency, or it would not succeed. A third reason is the fact that Appadurai recommended that the notion of the "capacity to aspire" should be examined in the light of the capability approach. As Appadurai formulates it, "…Sen has made major and overlapping arguments for placing matters of freedom, dignity, and moral well-being at the heart of welfare and its economics…it highlights the need for a parallel internal opening in how to understand culture, so that Sen's radical expansion of the idea of welfare can find its strongest cultural counterpoint" (Appadurai, 2004:63).

3.2.2 The nature of the capability approach

The capability approach is still an incomplete theory where many aspects have to be theorised more comprehensively (Robeyns, 2011a) and the process of applying the approach in practice is also still being developed (Robeyns, 2006). There have nevertheless been (published) applications of qualitative studies, some from the perspective of small groups or NGO's, and some of these qualitative capability studies will be reviewed in this chapter. The capability approach can be seen as a normative, positive and predictive approach – one which poses an ethical position which would support equitable access to the properties of "a good life"; one which uses and learns from empirical studies, and one which makes predictions on how policies might advance development, or not. Of these attributes, the normative is the central

one, which is however not sufficient if one wants to use it for poverty-reduction and development interventions (Alkire and Deneulin, 2009:4-5).

Sen developed this approach out of his critique of utilitarianism, and particularly of the way in which a lack of commodities has been used to reflect deprivation. In the formulation of this critique he responds to many of the problems in mainstream economic theory. With respect to economics the capability approach's main critique is against the utilitarian theories, and in empirical work against the narrow focus on commodities and monetary metrics (Kuklys and Robeyns, 2004). Sen focusses his critique of utilitarianism on i) consequentialism, which judges a choice by its consequences or achievements only, and conflating these achievements with the utilities acheived (Sen, 1992:32); ii) welfarism, which judges state intervention only in terms of utilities, with the exclusion of non-utility information, and iii) sum-ranking, where the sum of utilities is the only measure (Deneulin, 2006:2; Sen, 1992:6). An example of consequentialism can be found in Sen's example of the person who chooses not to eat because of a principle, as opposed to the person who cannot eat because he has no food available. The consequence of not eating is the same for both these individuals, but the one is able to exercise choice, and therefore has the capability to eat, while the other cannot exercise choice and lacks the capability to satisfy his hunger. An example of the exclusion of non-utility information would be to assess a disabled person's needs to be the same as that of an able-bodied person, while the former needs many more resources to be able to function in a similar way (Sen, 1992:28). Sum ranking would be illustrated by the conventional poverty indicators used by the World Bank and similar institutions.

In political philosophy, and theories of justice in particular, Sen poses his arguments particularly as a response to the work of John Rawls (1971, 1999), which he considers the most important theory of justice to be presented in the 20th century (Sen, 1992:75). Rawls introduced two principles of justice in an effort to develop the social contract theory as found in Locke, Rousseau and Kant, to a new level of abstraction – not to set up a specific form of government or perform any other concrete task. "Rather, the guiding idea is that the principles of justice *for the basic structure of society* are the object of the original agreement" (Rawls, 1999:10, my cursive). He then argues that society can be just if the two principles are followed. These are:

- "Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive social system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all.
- Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both
  - to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle, and
  - attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity" (Rawls, 1999:266).

Rawls writes that his theory is intended as an alternative to utilitarianism and its different versions (Rawls, 1999:20). Sen indeed sees the work of Rawls as a move in the direction of an approach centred on opportunity and freedom, rather than on outcomes achieved. He however contends that Rawls' concentration on the distribution of "primary goods" remains essentially resources-based and focused on the means rather than the ends, although these

primary goods include aspects such as "rights, liberties and opportunities, income and wealth, and the social bases of self-respect" (Sen, 1992:80).

Another important notion advanced by Sen is the need to recognise human diversity. The ways in which an individual's life and choices are shaped and constrained by context, circumstances, gender, physical and mental attributes and other social and personal dynamics mean that resources-based metrics such as Rawlsian social primary goods or income metrics might not allow for the sufficient expression of human diversity (Sen, 1992:19-21).

The next important question, in fact the "central question in the analysis and assessment of inequality…'equality of *what*?'" (Sen, 1992:ix) leads us to the central concept in the approach. Different theorists hold different positions on what should be equal – income, welfare levels, utilities, or rights and liberties. The capability approach builds on the premise that more important than these, there should be equality of real (and therefore realisable) opportunities. Sen then proposes that the metric for deprivation should be seen as the individual's freedom to choose from an opportunity set which she has (or does not have) available, and he uses the term 'capability' for such real opportunity. 'Real opportunity' takes into account that access to opportunities is not universal, for a range of reasons, such as the ways in which identity issues like gender, race, class and culture can constrain access. Another example of constrained opportunities could be that institutions might be dysfunctional, or be affected by adverse economic conditions.

This enables Sen to use the achievement of "the richness of human life" as the norm which should guide an exploration of social change or development (Sen, 1990:43). Conceptually the approach is based on notions expressed by many thinkers throughout the history of philosophy and economics. He partly derives the idea of the quality of life as the ability to perform the work or activities ("functions") which one values, from Aristotle. Marx likewise took that idea from Aristotle, and used it to fundamentally shape his own theory: "It will be seen how in place of the wealth and poverty of political economy come the rich human being and rich human need. The rich human being is simultaneously the human being in need of a totality of human life-activities – the man (*sic*) in whom his own realization exists as an inner necessity, as need" (quoted in Sen, 1990:43, and in Nussbaum, 1987:1). Both Adam Smith and later Karl Marx moreover wrote about functionings and the capability to function as fundamental concepts (Sen, 1990), and Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill both had a rounded and comprehensive account of human nature and functioning (Oakley, 1994). Philosophers such as Hume and Kant also saw "the full development of human beings" as the real purpose of human activities and endeavours (Streeten, 2003:68).

One of the central tenets of the capability approach is that people are both the means and the ends of development – they are the instruments of development and development is for their sake (Sen, 1990:41; Alkire, 2005:117). For Sen income, utilities, commodities, primary goods or rights are important, even very important, as the means of development; the end will always be the individual human being. The human being could of course also be the means as well as the end of development (Sen, 1992:27; Sen, 1990). In using a good to achieve a

functioning, certain conversion factors come into play – conversion factors being "the degree in which a person can transform a resource into a functioning" (Robeyns, 2011a:7). A number of different conversion factors have been identified. Personal conversion factors deal with personal charateristics which are not directly related to agency, such as sex, disability, and many more. Social conversion factors deal with societal factors such as norms and values, and the nature of institutions and cultural practices, to name a few. Environmental conversion factors relate to the natural or created environment in which a person lives (Robeyns, 2005:99; Robeyns, 2011a:7). Relational conversion factors can be based on complex intragroup relations and interactions (Sen, 1992:33), as for instance in the gendered access to food, while distributional conversion factors might for instance reveal how specific distribution patterns determine access to food at times of shortage (Sen and Dreze, 1999:7).

To extend the essential idea of a good life being one in which one has the freedom to do what one chooses to, Sen developed a number of central concepts, which will now be discussed more extensively.

3.2.3 Central concepts: functionings and capabilities[41]

Functionings are *beings and doings*, that is anything an individual can be or do. It therefore includes a very wide range of possible activities, and implies that the person under discussion is actively involved in his or her life, not merely a passive recipient of services.[42] Sen also points out that these activities or states of being need not necessarily be "athletic" ones – the ordinary and elementary activities of being well-nourished, acquiring shelter, and avoiding morbidity are all examples of beings and doings. So also are the more elaborate functionings such as having self-respect and "going without shame" (Sen, 1990:44). Goods and services are obviously necessary for the realisation of most of these functionings, as is income. Yet money and goods are merely instrumentally important in the capability approach, to the extent that they may extend the range of capabilities available to an individual, but not as goals in themselves (Sen, 1992:44; Sen, 1999:19, 20). Sen emphasises Aristotle's view that functionings are constitutive of a person, and that the extent to which one is able to achieve your valued activities or functionings would contribute to well-being and quality of life (Sen, 1990:44). It is also important to note that what is important is not which individual functionings are separately open to a person, but what combination or set of functionings is available (Robeyns, 2011a). If one has the opportunity to study but not to find suitable work with your qualification, the functioning of being able to study does not offer access to the full realisation of your capabilities. Functionings are the 'primitive' element of the theory. The next step of the analysis would therefore be to investigate whether and to what extent one is

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[41] The concept *entitlements* will not be explored here as Sen used that mainly in the context of famines and food security, which does not come under discussion in the dissertation.

[42] Conceptually, the action undertaken in achieving functionings and capabilities can be distinguished from agency, which focuses on aspects that are more closely related to autonomy. In practice, a clear division might not always be possible. Sen (1999:xii) refers to the "deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements" .

able to achieve these valued functionings, and this leads to the concept of capabilities, the 'derived' notion (Sen, 1990:44).

Capabilities represent the freedom of or opportunity for an individual to achieve her functionings. The "totality of human life-activities" described by Marx above are seen by Sen (1990:44) as a combination of different functionings – a "functioning n-tuple" of functionings. To the extent that these are really available to an individual, they are capabilities, which are real opportunities. Alkire (2005:121) formulates it as follows: "Capability is a budget set; it is a set of real opportunities that you could use in one way or another, the paths that lie open before you." It is important to observe that capabilities refer only to functionings of value or the absence of functionings of disvalue/functionings with negative value, as captured in the formulation "objectives we have reason to value" (Sen, 1992:xi). Functionings as a conceptual category can be seen as "morally neutral" (Robeyns, 2011a). They could be good or bad, helpful or harmful. Alkire maintains that harmful or evil capabilities are by definition excluded by the formulation "which we have reason to value" (Alkire, 2005:121, Alkire, 2002:3) but some might of course value a harmful capability. The definition of what would be harmful is also complex, and could rely on the worldview of a person. This makes it very difficult to always be clear about goodness and badness, which would support the moral neutrality mentioned above (Robeyns, 2011a).

Capabilities are furthermore a combination or a set of institutional or social opportunities which are in interaction with agency, or personal engagement (Sen, 1999:xi, xii). Fundamentally however "individual freedom is quintessentially a social product" within a two-way process in which social arrangements are expanded towards increased individual freedom and individuals or groups use their freedoms to improve these social arrangements (Sen, 1999:31). This fundamental insight has ground-breaking implications for disciplines such as Economics, Development Studies, Sociology, Political Studies and Psychology, and for governance and policy formulation. It implies, *inter alia*, that the extension of well-functioning and therefore *real* opportunities and freedom of choice precedes development and could prevent at least some political, economic, social and psychological breakdown. It is also compatible with recent developments in social theory, as will be seen in the section on social theory in chapter four.

3.2.4 Differences between Sen and Nussbaum

Martha Nussbaum (2000:11-15) explains how she sees the similarities between Sen's version of the capability approach and her version, which she calls "the capabilities approach". Firstly they both agree about using the capability space for measurements and assessments, except that Nussbaum sees the notion of thresholds as more important. Secondly they both support political liberty, and lastly they both emphasise the value of each individual in capability measurement. In a later publication she adds two points, namely that both versions are pluralist about value, in that capability achievements are qualitatively different, not only numerically; and that they are "concerned with entrenched social injustice and inequality" (Nussbaum, 2011:18-19). Nussbaum (2000) then identifies the following main differences between the two approaches: she has produced stronger arguments against cultural relativism,

which might constrain the development of universal norms for social policy formulation; she has relied more heavily on the ideas of Aristotle and Marx, and she has produced a universal list, which Sen has not. In her new work she adds that Sen supports the idea of doing a comprehensive national quality of life assessment in the capability space, "in that sense departing from the deliberately limited aims of my political liberalism" (Nussbaum 2011:20). Sen (2005a) likewise discusses his view of particularly the list, and these arguments will be given below when the measurement of functionings and capabilities is discussed.

Robeyns (2005b:103) emphasises that Nussbaum uses the approach from the perspective of a moral-legal-political philosophy, where she attempts to develop a partial theory of justice by suggesting universal dimensions which should be present in each constitution. To achieve this, she developed a general list of ten central human capabilities (Nussbaum, 2000:78-80; Nussbaum, 2011:33-34). As her work has been developed within the humanities, she uses academic tools which reflect this. Her work "engages more with the power of narratives and poetic texts to better understand people's hopes, desires, aspirations, motivations and decisions" (Robeyns, 2005b:104), and is helpful in terms of "description, explanation and prescription" (Gasper & Van Staveren, 2003:143). Sen, on the other hand, developed the capability approach out of his insights related to his work on social choice, and his interest in the liberal philosophical question 'equality of what?' His theorising is therefore rooted in welfare economics and its quantitative methods, strongly supported by liberal philosophical debates. Sen's capability approach is moreover a framework that can be used for many purposes, not a theory with a more specific aim (Robeyns, 2005a:197).

Robeyns (2005b:104) furthermore observes that Nussbaum develops three categories of capabilities, which differ from those of Sen. These are basic or innate capabilities; internal capabilities, which allow a person to exercise a specific capability, and combined capabilities, which are internal capabilities combined with external provision. These formulations all seem to contain aspects of agency, as understood in social theory, but without specific reference to agency. Nussbaum in fact concludes her most recent book by saying "…because what is valued is the freedom to do or not to do, agency is woven throughout. As of now, I conclude that there is no need for a distinction between agency freedom and well-being freedom" (Nussbaum, 2011:201). Apart from not wanting to make the distinction, Nussbaum creates the impression here that she does not think that there is a need for a specific agency analysis in a political analysis.

3.2.5 The measurement of functionings and capabilities

The measurement and assessment of functionings and capabilities will be dealt with in some detail, although this study does not deal with the selection and measurement of a list of functionings or capabilities. I shall nevertheless assess whether the functionings and capabilities of the women who participated in the study increased as a result of their attempts to realise their aspirations, and for this reason it is necessary to know how functionings and capabilities are normally measured and/or assessed. The measurement of functionings and capabilities is moreover an important question in its own right, as the viability of the approach depends to a large degree on how well it can be operationalised. The question of

which capabilities should be selected for assessment, who should select them, and how the information should be aggregated to get an overall capability assessment, are still subject to debate (Robeyns, 2011a:11). Some of the main guidelines given by Sen and other prominent capability scholars on measurement will be described in this section.

As the capability approach can be applied in different settings for different purposes, the measurement of capabilities and functionings has to be designed for each specific purpose and context. Robeyns (2005a:193,194) points out that there are three broad modes of capability analysis, each of which serves a different epistemological purpose. Welfare and quality of life measurements by quantitative social scientists such as economists employ functionings and capabilities as social indicators. This is probably the most extensive application of the capability approach. Descriptive analysis or thick description is often used by social scientists who undertake qualitative studies, and these investigations use a narrative approach, in which functionings and capabilities form a part of the narrative. They are less common in the field of capability studies. Lastly normative theorising is done by moral and political philosophers. In this case questions of inequality and injustice, and the foundations of a utopian society are explored with reference to functionings and capabilities. In assessing or measuring functionings or capabilities it is therefore important that the researcher should keep in mind the epistemological purpose of her research.

Alkire (2008:28-34) argues that there are two (further) important categories of research emphasis in capability studies: evaluative and prospective studies. Evaluative studies do comparative assessments of states of affairs or policies by comparing capabilities, while prospective studies provide policy recommendations for policies which are considered most likely to provide for the expansion of capabilities. These two processes are often complementary and both can be found in many studies.

In designing a capability research programme, the researcher would firstly therefore define the space in which the research will be undertaken as that of capabilities. This space could be subject to a narrow interpretation, where the notion of capabilities is the primary informational space for the enquiry, or to a broad interpretation. In the case of a broad interpretation the primary space is also that of capabilities, but additional aspects or dimensions are included in the analysis, such as concerns of distributive justice or sustainability, or an assessment of whether human rights had been protected. It might also be necessary to indicate how social choice took place, for example through democratic or participatory processes (Alkire, 2008:29). The *focal space* is the dimensions one focusses on. Alternative focal spaces can therefore be (1) functionings, (2) capabilities, (3) a combination of these, (4) money, (5) subjective wellbeing, or (6) macro social indicators such as unemployment statistics, GNP per capita, and/or other similar indicators.

When the space has been defined, measurement can be considered. Sen sees the question of measurement of well-being as the relation between two types of diversity: the basic diversity of human beings, and "the multiplicity of variables in terms of which equality can be judged" (Sen, 1992:1). Both should be kept in mind by the researcher. If the diversity between human

beings would be ignored, that could lead to greater inequality, as justice might require a different and generally more favourable treatment of the disadvantaged. Regarding the multiplicity of variables, a *focal variable* should be selected, such as health, income or happiness, which may again have an internal plurality, and could for instance consist of a number of capabilities, or of a combination of capabilities and functionings (Sen, 1992:1-2). Sen (1992:49) furthermore points out that capability measurement is concerned with the "real alternatives we have". However, "[t]he achievement of well-being is not independent of the process through which we achieve various functionings and the part that our own decisions play in those choices" (*Ibid*:50). Aspects of process and agency in capability achievement should therefore be included in one's thinking about dimensions and indicators. As one of the main objectives of the capability approach is to move away from measuring utilities and commodities, it is especially important to note that "there is no difference *as far as the space is concerned* between focusing on functionings *or* on capabilities. A functioning combination is a *point* in such a space, whereas capability is a *set* of such points (*Ibid*:50)." The researcher is therefore invited to enter this framework of ideas, and to creatively use the tools in the capability toolbox to achieve her research objectives.

A key decision in measurement is obviously whether one would measure functionings or capabilities. "Ideally, the capability approach should take note of the full extent of freedom to choose between different functioning bundles, but limits of practicality may often force the analysis to be confined to examining the *achieved* functioning bundle only" (Sen, 1992:53). Capabilities are mostly not directly observable, and a capability set therefore has to be constructed by means of assumptions and presumptions concerning opportunities and constraints (Sen, 1990:49). It might be so difficult to get information on capabilities, that directly focusing on functionings might prove to be the better alternative (Sen, 1992:52).

In addition, the researcher should consider whether the freedom to achieve these functionings is instrumentally or intrinsically important, both of which alternatives can be accommodated within the capability approach. If the freedom to achieve these functionings is only instrumentally important, then only the achieved states are important, not the opportunities. In this case "the capability set is valued only for the sake of the best alternative available for choice (or the actual alternative chosen)" (Sen, 1990:49). This can be termed an elementary evaluation. If the freedom to achieve various functioning combinations is intrinsically important, if the choice itself is valuable and important, then all the available alternative combinations of the full capability set must be taken into account. This is inherently more difficult and requires estimations and assumptions (Sen, 1990:48-49).

The *selection* of which capabilities, functionings and dimensions which will be measured or assessed is an important step in the research process. This can be followed by the allocation of *possible weights,* based on the judgment of whether the dimension is important or trivial. How will these weights then be selected? "This judgmental exercise can be resolved only through reasoned evaluation" (Sen, 1999:78). In the case of an individual, the process will rely on individual reflection. If the assessment takes the form of a social evaluation, the selection process should include public discussion, consensus, and "democratic

understanding and acceptance" (Sen, 1999:78-79). This is inevitably a messy process, but this messiness is unavoidable if one wants to get an optimal result, of measuring the most appropriate functionings and capabilities (*Ibid*.)

The selection and weighting of dimensions for the measurement of capability has been extensively discussed and debated in the capability literature (Alkire, 2008; Comim, 2008; Gasper, 2007; Robeyns, 2005a), and will always be a complex process. It is nevertheless exactly in this complexity that much of the value of the capability approach lies – the fact that the prioritisation of dimensions to be measured should be reasoned for each individual person means that a process of disaggregation operates throughout. The researcher should attempt to be as specific and as detailed as possible about the selection procedure in order to measure or assess that which will give the most appropriate outcomes in each case. "The focus has to be related to the underlying concerns and values, in terms of which some definable functionings may be important and others quite trivial and negligible" (Sen, 1992:44). The identification of the important and of the trivial is therefore an inherent part of the research process. Moreover, the more important variables have to be more heavily weighted, and the less important have to be given less weight – and if possible this relative weighting should attempt to capture the exact ambiguity of the underlying values (Sen 1992:46-49).

As has been mentioned before, Sen deliberately chooses an underspecified approach, despite extensive criticism (Gasper & van Staveren, 2003; Nussbaum, 2003; Stewart, 2001; Sugden, 1993). The underspecified nature of Sen's capability approach shows also in the absence of a well-defined list of relevant capabilities in his work. Sen's reluctance to endorse the idea of a fixed and universal list comes from three main considerations: he does not see how one list could apply to vastly different contexts, and a fixed list could not change over time to accommodate changed insights and conditions. Lastly he places a high value on the public deliberation and "transparent valuational scrutiny" (Sen, 2005a:157) of which issues should be on a list. In such a public deliberation those who participate in the decision on which capabilities to select will be encouraged to raise their "underlying concerns and values". He has suggested various items which could be on a list, but would prefer not to have a final and fixed list for all contexts (Sen, 2005a:157-160). Each context and situation therefore justifies a discrete exploration of relevant functionings and capabilities. The purpose of the research would also contribute to this decision, and the researcher in collaboration with the groups who will be affected by the outcomes of the research would have to discern which the relevant capabilities would be. In short, "it matters how the list is drawn up" (Robeyns, 2005a:200). Futhermore, Sen supports a specific selection of social theories for each application of the approach, to give an account of how human nature or "the good life" is seen. This will also influence the selection of functionings and capabilities, and underlines the importance of having a specific list for each specific research programme (Robeyns, 2005a:196).

As seen in the previous section, Nussbaum argues that there are ten central capabilities which would form the constitutional basis of a just society, and that these are the capabilities to be measured. These ten capabilities have been derived from Aristotle's ideas of human

functioning and how Marx had made use of them. Nussbaum thus proposes that different people's quality of life always be compared in the space of these central capabilities. The intuitive idea behind it is that certain functions are particularly central in human life, and that they are what make life truly human – this being what Marx found in Aristotle. Marx also took the idea from Aristotle that certain material resources are needed for the human being to fulfil his or her potential. In this respect he diverted from Kant, but he took from Kant the notion of the dignity of all human beings (Nussbaum, 2000:70-73). The ten capabilities in Nussbaum's list are (Nussbaum, 2000:78-80; 2011:33-34):

- *Life*. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living.

- *Bodily Health*. Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.

- *Bodily Integrity*. Being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.

- *Senses, Imagination, and Thought*. Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason—and to do these things in a "truly human" way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, imagination and thought.

- *Emotions.* Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety.

- *Practical Reason.* Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life.

- *Affiliation,* which consists of two concepts:
    - Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other humans.
    - Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails provisions of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion, national origin and species.

- *Other Species.* Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.

- *Play.* Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.

- *Control over one's Environment* also consists of two concepts:
    - *Political.* Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.
    - *Material.* Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and

having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. In work, being able to work as a human, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.

Nussbaum emphasises that these capabilities are all of central importance and of equal weight. She also points out that they are related to one another in complex ways. Nevertheless, *practical reason* and *affiliation* are especially important, as all the other capabilities can be seen to be organised within these two (*Ibid*, 2000:81-82).

Nussbaum's list and the ideas behind it have equally been challenged broadly (Clark, 2013; Jagger, 2006; Okin, 2003; Robeyns, 2005a:198; Stewart, 2013). One major area of contention is that Nussbaum (2000:76) says: "The list represents the result of years of cross-cultural discussion," which is challenged by Robeyns (2005a), Jagger (2006) and Clark (2013), amongst others. Clark particularly criticises Nussbaum for using a "Socratic intuitionism", which he suggests leads to rash conclusions regarding fundamental entitlements (Clark, 2013:176, 177). This critique is summarised by Stewart: "…a definitive acceptable list cannot emerge from the pen of just one person, however distinguished, but must be the subject of widespread discussion among philosophers, political scientists and, above all, people worldwide" (Stewart, 2013:157). To address this, and the bias which a researcher could unwittingly build into her selection of capabilities, Robeyns (2005a:205-206) suggests a set of criteria which all lists should comply with:

- *Explicit formulation*: an explicit list should be presented and defended in public fora.
- *Methodological justification*: The way in which the list was generated should be justified and defended.
- *Different levels of generality*: there should be a list at the level of ideal theory, and a second list which would be adapted for real and empirical conditions.
- *Exhaustion and non-reduction*: all important elements should be on the list, including market and non-market related capabilities.

One of the major differences between the positions of Sen and Nussbaum is therefore that Sen prioritises the process of individual and/or collective discernment of which functionings and capabilities are important to assess in each situation and context, while Nussbaum provides a universal list which should ultimately lead to constitutional guarantees. Apart from the fact that these capabilities might or might not be the relevant ones for the specific situation, Robeyns argues that the fact that the research participants have not been consulted on the list invalidates the list for quality of life or inequality measurement purposes, although not for the purpose of formulating a partial theory of justice (Robeyns, 2005a:200).

Many scholars and thinkers on development and progress have formulated the dimensions they see as crucial, and these lists are available as examples to the capability researcher. Some predate the capability approach, or were written from a different theoretical vantage point, while others were drawn up for capability assessments. Thirty nine such lists are

summarised by Alkire (2002:78-87). Many more studies have of course been conducted since in which the selection of capability dimensions has been a key process, amongst which are those of Clark (2003, 2005); Clark and Qizilbash (2008); Walker (2008), and Wolff and De-Shalit (2007). In Britain a very interesting process is underway to draw up a country-specific list for the measurement of inequality, with a number of prominent scholars debating the possible capabilities which could feature on such a list. Ten capabilities have been suggested (Vizard and Burchardt, 2007).

Once the relevant capabilities have been selected, Comim (2008: 185-197) then suggests a number of steps for the measurement of capabilities. These steps include an anthropological exercise in which the researcher involves the survey participants in gaining information on the area; the choice of measurable and reliable indicators; the selection of statistical tools, and the reconciliation of the foundational and practical level of the analysis. An example of the development of indicators is the paper by Anand et al (2009) where the authors develop a set of indicators for the ten dimensions on Martha Nussbaum's list. These steps are therefore standard research procedures, which can be employed within a capability perspective.

In the same way complementary approaches can be used in tandem with the capability approach. Both standard economic theories and more alternative theories, such as the livelihoods approach, feminist economics or environmental economics can be used to explore the ways in which functionings and capabilities are affected by a particular research procedure.[43]

In a paper which reviews the kinds of studies that have been undertaken as capability research, Robeyns (2006) identifies nine types of studies, which can be seen to range across the three modes identified at the beginning of this section. These studies vary from the general assessment of human development of countries and the identification of the poor in developing as well as economically advanced countries, to the assessment of small-scale development projects. The classic example of the latter is that which was done by Sabina Alkire (2002) in Pakistan, where she did a capability cost-benefit assessment of three small Oxfam projects, a project which will (indirectly) inform the current study. There are also studies which deal with the deprivation of disabled people, studies which assess gender inequalities, and studies which debate policies. Lastly some scholars have used the capability approach to critique social norms, practices and discourses, while capabilities are also used to inform some non-normative studies, such as ethnographic studies (Robeyns, 2006:360-370).

The capability approach is a young approach, and its operationalisation is still a relatively new project. It can therefore be assumed that the theoretical elaboration of the research process will develop and extend as more researchers experiment with the measurement and assessment of functionings and capabilities.

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[43] This study uses the capability approach in combination with the livelihoods approach.

One crucial issue that still has to be addressed is the emphasis which Sen places on the assessment of the individual, and the associated problem of the lack of space given in the approach to social considerations. This will be considered in the following section.

3.2.6 Individualism in the capability approach[44]

In this section I shall briefly address some of the literature on two questions in relation to the use of individualism in the capability approach. The first is whether individual or collective capabilities should be assessed, and the second is how social influences are considered in the capability approach, and whether this consideration is sufficient.

One of the criticisms brought against the capability approach is the fact that it deals with the measurement and assessement of the functionings and capabilities of individuals only (Robeyns, 2000:16). Stewart (2005:199), for instance, reasons that group capabilities should be researched more extensively. She recommends that scholars working in the capability approach should research the conceptual, empirical and policy aspects of working with group capabilities. When valuable group capabilities have been identified, in the same way as individual capabilities, they can also be ranked in relation to the ways in which they promote valuable individual capabilities. Only then does the prospective agenda emerge – how valuable group capabilities can best be promoted (Stewart, 2005:199-201). Ibrahim (2006) initiates such a process and develops an integrated analytical framework for the measurement of 'collective capabilities', by researching the activities of self-help groups in Egypt. Ibrahim (2006:398) distinguishes collective capabilities from individual capabilities in two ways: they are only present through collective action, and the collective rather than individuals can benefit from the newly generated capabilities.

The question whether capabilities should be assessed individually or collectively is one which has been extensively explored (Alkire, 2008; Robeyns, 2008). Robeyns (2000:16-17) argues that the criticism against individualism in the capability approach collapses different forms of individualism into one: ethical individualism makes a claim as to who should be assessed in evaluative exercises, while methodological and ontological individualism claim that all social phenomena can only be understood in terms of individuals and their properties. "The capability approach embraces ethical individualism, but does *not* rely on ontological individualism" (Robeyns, 2000:17). There is thus an assumption in the capability approach that it is important to assess and measure the effect of social policies and arrangements on individuals. Furthermore Robeyns argues that it would be a mistake to talk about "community functionings" or about "community capabilities" as these could not be identified, except by aggregating a collective number. In this case capabilities would not reflect the approach as it was devised by Sen and this could lead to confusion (Robeyns, 2000:18).

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[44] The sections on individualism and adaptive preferences should be read together with Rational Choice theories in chapter four, pp.79-84.

The second issue deals with whether the capability approach creates sufficient space for the consideration of social influences on choice, agency, capabilities and functionings. A number of authors have written on the need for stronger social connections to be made in capability assessments. Stewart's paper on groups and capabilities mentioned above, makes an appeal for a more extensive consideration of group dynamics in the capability approach (Stewart, 2005). Smith and Seward (2009) also argue for better incorporation of social factors in the capability approach, while Dean (2009:261) considers the lack of recognition of the "constitutive nature of human interdependency" as a one of three shortcomings in the capability approach which diminishes its usefulness.

Sen however consistently defends the recommendation that capabilities be assessed individually (Sen 2002, 1999), stating that the diversity of individuals, even in homogeneous circumstances, necessitates the individual assessment of what a person can be and do. Individual assessments indicate adherence to the values of equity, equal respect for all, and the idea that all individuals have equal human dignity, whatever their circumstances. Sen emphasises that individuals always function within collective realities, and that the criticism expressed by *inter alia* Stewart and Deneulin, and by Evans, that he does not pay sufficient attention to the collective level, is unfounded. Assessments should be done within collective *contexts*, as the world in which we live is social by nature (Sen, 2002:80). "To counter the problems that we face, we have to see individual freedom as a social commitment. This is the basic approach that this work tries to explore and examine" (Sen, 1999:xii).

Apart from distinguishing between different forms of individualism, Robeyns furthermore argues that the capability approach makes theoretical provision for social factors in two ways: by means of social conversion factors, and implicitly, in requiring the exercise of choice to turn capabilities into functionings, which implies social interactions and processes (Robeyns, 2000; 2005b). Alkire (2008:30-35) takes Robeyns' position further by affirming it, and then arguing that the capability approach does both evaluative and prospective analyses. An evaluative analysis asks which capabilities expanded, and how much, and this analysis is usually an individual one. In this case, and also when arguments are made from the perspective of a theory of justice, ethical individualism holds. A prospective application of the capability approach, on the other hand, is "a working set of the policies, activities and recommendations which are considered…most likely to generate considerable capability expansion – together with the processes by which these policies/activities /recommendations are generated and the contexts in which they will be more likely to deliver these benefits" (Alkire, 2008:30). Alkire (2008:35) then argues that ethical individualism does not apply to this role of "*how to promote capabilities* – the task of human development, of creating 'development as freedom.'" She then reads Deneulin's criticism against individualism in the capability approach as a criticism that the capability approach focusses too much on evaluative analysis, at the expense of prospective analysis (*Ibid*:35).

Although Robeyns (2000, 2005b) has shown that there is sufficient scope for the consideration of social influences in the capability approach, this might be an area in which the awareness of researchers can be challenged. Stewart (2005) exercises a plea for a greater

consideration of such social influences, as we all, as human beings, are embedded in relationships. It is therefore impossible to know how an individual making a choice was influenced and swayed by others, whether in primary relationships such as families, or in social, cultural or political groups of any number of kinds. "As a result one loses the attractive simplicity arising from the assumption that an autonomous individual has made a choice and that, by virtue of this, the right choice has been made. Instead, one has a much dizzier situation –choices have been influenced by groups, and whether the choices are good or bad must depend on a judgement about the nature of the group influences and the resulting choices. Yet who is to make that judgement, since we are all influenced by our social conditioning?" (Stewart, 2005:189-190).[45]

In conclusion, there are clear advantages to individual assessment. It allows for more detail on individuals, better verification, better disaggregation, and has the advantage that social biases such as gender and racial prejudice cannot obscure data to the same extent as it would have in collective assessments. In qualitative assessments individual profiles allow for the emergence of the "rich human being" which Sen (1990:43) has in mind as he writes about capabilities. The use of the individual as the unit of measurement of functionings or capabilities can be argued to be one of the strengths of the capability approach, and researchers often select individual assessment as a preferred strategy (Alkire, 2002; Kleine, 2009:115).

3.3 Adaptation
3.3.1 Introduction
Although the theorisation of adaptive preferences emerged from rational choice theory,[46] a line of thought which is associated with behaviourist psychology and which is controversial, adaptation is a concept which can assist the researcher in assessing and understanding self-imposed as well as institutional constraints upon individual freedom of choice and freedom of action, or capability. As such it can be very useful, if employed within a non-deterministic understanding.

When Amartya Sen named the book in which he attempted to reach a broader audience, he called it "Development as Freedom". With this title he emphasised the importance of free choice in human development, which Socrates and Aristotle first raised at a time when the worldview was deterministic (Chirkov et al, 2011:3). It follows that it would be important to understand how freedom of choice is achievable and what factors could conceivably prevent it. The assessment of adaptive preferences, aspirations, choice or agency is one tool which can be used to attempt to understand whether people exercised choice freely or whether their choices were limited.

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[45] The analysis of adaptive preferences of course offers one way to probe choices and to ask how conditioned responses impact on them.

Both Sen (1985, 1992) and Nussbaum (2000) have emphasised that capability is a more appropriate space for the measurement or assessment of quality of life or equality than utilitarianism, because long-term deprivation can lead to subjective adaptation based on conditioned responses. As this claim is part of the justification of the capability approach, it needs serious consideration, as the capability approach might be as vulnerable as utilitarianism in this regard (Teschl and Comim, 2005; Burchardt, 2009; Clark, 2009; Clark 2012:66).

As I am examining the ways in which the pursuit of one's aspirations might be agency-unlocking, it is particularly important to understand how and to what extent agency, aspirations, choice and action might be adapted. In order to be able to undertake this exploration, I shall now look more closely at what adaptation is and how it can operate. Adaptation has been variously defined by different scholars, and only those definitions which relate to this study will be used here.

3.3.2 Definitions and descriptions of adaptation

The type of adaptation or adaptive preferences which will be identified in this research have to do with "the existence of processes that prevent the free exercise of individuals' autonomous choices" (Teschl and Comim, 2005:233). Elster (1983:22) sees adaptation as the adjustment of aspirations "to what is seen as possible." Sen (2005b:321-325) describes how his awareness grew of women's self-limitation, while they believed that they were acting correctly, and how he came to understand "how gender inequality survives and flourishes, working in a valuational mist that engulfs all and which works by making allies out of the victims" (Sen, 2005b:322).

Adaptation has been widely described and debated in the literature, but the work of Elster and Sen will be concentrated on in this literature review for the purpose of understanding it within the parameters of the capability approach, and being able to assess whether and how this phenomenon affected the women who participated in this study. Elster's theoretical discussion provides a foundation for exploring the different forms of adaptation which might occur in this setting, while Sen uses the term in a less systematic way, and mainly to point to its consequences. He uses adaptation to explain why people living in dire conditions might still subjectively feel that their quality of life is good, and why the underdog accepts his situation (Conradie and Robeyns, 2013:563). He continually cautions against blind acceptance of what disadvantaged people say in defense of their limited options (Sen, 1985; 1992; 2005b).

Elster developed the idea that choice is not always rational, but can reflect bias or constrained preference in his book *Sour Grapes* (1983). The title of the book is based on Aesop's fable of the fox which could not reach a bunch of grapes, and therefore called them sour. The book "reflects the idea that the preferences underlying a choice may be *shaped by the constraints*" (Elster, 1983:vi, my cursive). The exploration of how people's decisions and preferences can be shaped by possible constraints has formed the theme of much of the theorisation of adaptation and adaptive preferences, and will be reviewed here. The constraints themselves

are not the primary object of exploration here, and will be dealt with elsewhere. Furthermore the relationship between preferences and aspirations has to be explored. Although preferences and aspirations can both be adapted, and in similar ways, they are not synonymous. At the same time there is no single answer as to how they differ, as economists use preferences in a variety of ways. At the level of their most common use, they can be said to differ in three ways. Preferences deal with wishes for the present, while aspirations concern dreams for the future; preferences normally deal with one's own well-being, while aspirations can concern one's own dreams or the well-being of others, and lastly aspirations are invariably strongly influenced by one's context and by social interaction, while this is not necessarily true of preferences (Conradie and Robeyns, 2013:562).[47] For the purposes of this overview the adaptation of preferences and of aspirations will be dealt with together, as I assume that the same dynamics operate in the case of the adaptation of aspirations as those that operate in the case of the adaptation of preferences.

Elster's discussion on adaptive preferences deal firstly with forms of "natural" adaptation, and then he discusses two forms of adaptation where a person withdraws from an aspiration because of painful dissonance. The first kind of "natural" adaptation we shall deal with here is preference formation when a different set of options occur, resulting in changed preferences, where aspirations sometimes adjust to accommodate the new options (Elster, 1983:117-119; Qizilbash, 2012:37,41). Elster distinguishes nine different mechanisms or forms of adaptation which are not based on habituation or resignation. Although these mechanisms include forms of adaptation such as manipulation and addiction, they essentially show the ways in which an individual would deal with a problem itself rather than to deny it. Elster thus broadly distinguishes these nine mechanisms from adaptive preferences. Two of them might be of particular interest here: *preference change through learning* and *character planning*.

Preference change through learning takes place when one selects a preference based on prior experience. One is then in a position to make a more informed choice, and because the choice is based on lived experience, it is also likely to be irreversible. Preference formation as *character planning* (Elster, 1983:117-119) implies a deliberative and reasoned process in which the issue at hand is consciously reflected on. Whilst adaptive preferences usually take place 'behind the back' of the person making the decision, this kind of choice is very different. It reflects a psychological or Stoic, Buddhist or Spinozistic point of departure. "In both cases the process begins with a state of tension between what you can do and what you might like to do. If the escape from this tension takes place by some causal mechanism of dissonance reduction, we are dealing with sour grapes; if it is engineered by conscious 'strategies of liberation', with character planning. It is the difference between preferences shaped by drives or by meta-preferences" (Elster, 1983:117). Elster concludes that it must be seen as better to consciously adapt to the inevitable than to submit to resignation. Adaptation in the usual sense of the word therefore indicates that we learn from our experiences and from

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[47] These differences in the cited paper were formulated by Robeyns.

those of others, which enables us to reflectively position ourselves in relation to events which occur in our lives, and choices we have to make.

Elster (1983:113) then distinguishes two forms of adaptive behaviour which can lead to a lack or withdrawal of aspirations. The first is that of *habituation*, or what one is used to expect within a given context. This unreflective response to a change in their situation implies that the ways in which people have been socialised, operate as a first level of choice. The actual options which are available in reality are not seen, because only the conditioned responses occur to them. It might therefore be that the person is not conscious of any alternatives, and that the choice is exercised 'non-consciously' (Watts, 2009:428). In Elster's terms the choice takes place 'behind the back' of the person (Elster, 1983: 117), implying that she is just not taking notice of these alternative options, because it does not occur to her to do so. Watts points out that Elster uses two versions of the Sour Grapes fable to illustrate his point – first the so-called English version where the fox cannot reach the grapes and therefore decides they must be sour, as an illustration of adaptive preferences. Then he invokes the French version of La Fontaine, in which the fox misperceives the green ripe grapes as not ripe and sour, thereby illustrating retroactive rationalisation, a form of preference deformation (Watts, 2009:428). The essence of this response is that the person does engage with the problem, but in terms of a framework of thought into which she was socialised earlier, not rationally and reflectively. In Elster's view these preferences are not irreversible.

The third form of adaptation, namely *resignation*, is one often discussed by Sen, and deals with those who have suffered long-standing deprivation and limited opportunities, and make the best of it by being grateful for small mercies (Sen, 1985; 1992:55). Clark (2012:3) terms this "non-grumbling resignation in the face of hardship and injustice". The person therefore avoids unnecessary disappointment and frustration by down-scaling her aspirations, and seeing her dire situation as the only possible option, which has to be accepted with resignation. She does not in this version actively engage with possible options, except to the point where she denies their possibility. If she would become aware of and move away from her adaptive preferences, autonomy might increase, but frustration might likewise increase. Adaptation is therefore concerned with a balancing of the needs for less frustration and more autonomy, and in the case of resignation the choice is made for less frustration and less autonomy. Qizilbash sees this form of adaptation as different from that identified by Elster (Qizilbash, 2012:41), but Clark includes both under the same heading of non-grumbling resignation. Watts (2009) uses the term "self-abnegation" instead of resignation. Habituation and resignation can thus be seen as responses which are both related by the underlying theme of adaptation to unwanted or unjust circumstances, yet the two concepts have different dynamics and levels of personal involvement, and it therefore seems valid to distinguish between them in the way that Qizilbash does, and in the way that is done here.

Ben Colburn (2011) has also commented on Elster's arguments regarding adaptive preference formation and character planning. He reads Elster as saying that character planning is positive because it is conscious and autonomous, and adaptive preferences are negative, because they are unconscious and non-autonomous. Colburn argues that Elster's argument fails as he does

not provide a clear account of autonomy, and that this means that we cannot engage with his notion of rationality. We can therefore not discover why adaptive preferences are negative, and what relationship this has to autonomy. Colburn then offers his own definition of autonomy: "deciding for oneself what is valuable, and live one's life in accordance with that decision" (*Ibid*:62). He proceeds to argue that our autonomy is at risk when there are *covert explanations* for our commitments (*Ibid*:66). This is in contrast to unconscious reasons, or reasons which we are merely unaware of. The distinction is that these covert reasons are hidden, and so we are necessarily unconscious of them. If decisions or choices have thus been formed in circumstances where we have been unconscious of the complete situation, they need not be adaptive, but where the circumstances are covert or hidden, there would be an inevitable element of adaptive preference. Such covert explanations for our commitments would lead to a lack of independence, and thus also to a lack of autonomy (*Ibid*:67). All adaptive preferences, according to Colburn, are based on covert explanations, and therefore necessarily negative. Character planning, on the contrary, is never covert, and so not negative. The key to Elster's reasoning, Colburn argues, is to understand the aspect of autonomy, which manifests as the opposite of covert explanations.

Serene Khader (2009) contributes to the debate on the nature of adaption by arguing that however attractive the idea is to view adaptive preferences as procedurally non-autonomous, or not freely chosen, this route is not justified as it is intuitively inconsistent, and as it justifies inappropriate attitudes towards those people who do adapt their preferences. It creates three different problems: that of elitism, that of seeing those who adapt as unworthy of consultation, and contravening the fact that we intuitively know that not all unreflective preferences are adaptive. She rather proposes identifying adaptation by using a conception of the good (Khader, 2009:171-185).[48]

Martha Nussbaum uses the analysis of adaptive preferences to formulate political and constitutional principles (2000:114), in line with her stated agenda. The example she particularly uses from both Sen's work and her own, is that of women's rights and how women often downplay their own needs. This happens at the level of national surveys, as revealed in Sen's analysis of the survey done by the All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health after the Great Bengal Famine in 1944, where 45.6% of widowers ranked their health 'ill' or 'indifferent', while only 2.5% of widows did so, despite the fact that widows were a specially vulnerable group with poor health and nutrition. It also happens in individual cases, such as the women from Andhra Pradesh Nussbaum worked with - Vasanti's adaptation was the shallowest, as she believed that her marriage situation was bad, although she did not see herself as wronged. Jayamma's perception was that women should accept the second best option in all things, and so her views were deeply adapted (Nussbaum, 2000: 138-140). "Applying Nussbaum's conceptualisation of adaptive preferences would thus entail identifying the absence of preferences (or aspirations) for the items on her list of capabilities,

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[48] Khader introduces the idea of using a concept of the good towards the end of her paper and does not motivate it substantially.

but also having some evidence that these preferences have been formed under unjust circumstances" (Conradie and Robeyns, 2013:563).

Another typology is offered by David Neff (2012:138), who identifies three kinds of "adaptation to poverty", a useful specification in a very broad research field. Apart from natural adaptation and resignation, he also refers to *optimism* as an adaptive preference. This form of adaptation is supported by the findings of Graham and Hoover (2007). They found that in contrast to the U.S., Latin America and Russia, where happiness is strongly correlated to income, education and health, in eleven African countries people were optimistic in spite of an inverse correlation between their optimism and income, health and security. The authors hypothesise that "given such extreme conditions, optimism among the poor may be a result of selection bias: individuals in such conditions may have to be optimistic to survive….Alternatively…conditions are so bad they can only improve" (Graham and Hoover, 2007:3). This is a potentially important study for the analysis of the Khayelitsha research which is described in this dissertation.

Teschl and Comim (2005) consider Sen and Nussbaum's view of adaptation too narrow, and attempt to broaden it by means of comparison to recent literature in the field of hedonic psychology. Whereas subjective assessments of adaptation might not be seen as reliable in capability assessments, it is often successfully employed in subjective well-being studies, and might inform the way in which adaptation is studied in the capability approach. Hedonic psychology considers that feelings of contentment, pleasure and pain do indeed matter, and that it is important whether life is considered pleasant or unpleasant. The ways in which adaptive preferences might operate in this regard are clearly important. Researchers in the field of subjective well-being have found that income and wealth are good predictors of subjective happiness and satisfaction, although the well-known "Easterlin Paradox" indicates that satisfaction increases with increased wealth, but only up to a certain level. At higher income levels people are less satisfied with an equal increase than poorer people are. This is partly attributed to the so-called "hedonic treadmill" (first introduced by Brickman and Campbell in 1971) which poses that satisfaction reaches a neutral level after some time, at which point it has to be re-activated with new stimuli. This applies both to income and to other satisfiers. Kahneman also raises the possibility of a "satisfaction treadmill", which would imply that people change the level at which they are satisfied as their aspirations increase, so that they are never fully satisfied. On the whole the work done in hedonic psychology shows how much the capability approach could potentially gain from not only looking at adaptation as resignation, but also as positive adaptation (Teschl and Comim, 2005:237-239).

A last and very comprehensive taxonomy of adaptation is that of David Clark (2012:3-5). He arranges the different forms of adaptation under five general headings: resignation, struggle and resistance, false expectations, under which he also places optimism, hedonic adaptation and natural adaptation. Under "valiant struggle in the face of adversity" he includes forms of resistance and "creative discontent" "following the politicisation of the oppressed and

disadvantaged". Based on Elster's view that less reflective actions are more adaptive and *vice versa*, it is not clear why these actions would be seen as adaptive.

In summary, the key reading of adaptive preferences for the purposes of this study is that of Elster, and particularly his view of adaptation as habituation or resignation. Habituation might occur in conditions where the person has been socialised into an acceptance of limiting conditions, and resignation is the non-consious giving-up by somebody who feels that her desires are unreachable.

3.3.3 Conceptual and critical discussion of adaptation and adaptive preferences

The question of how free we are to exercise our will and make our own choices is a timeless and important one. In *Songs of the Kings* modern novelist Barry Unsworth rewrote the story of *Iphigenia in Aulis,* originally by Euripides. King Agamemnon is waiting with his army for the winds to turn so that they can depart for Troy. Odysseus, the wily plotter, devises a scheme to ensure the loyalty of the waiting men, and prompts Agamemnon to ask his daughter Iphigenia to come to the island Aulis. This is ostensibly to marry Achilles, but they actually plan to sacrifice her to Artemis, to ensure the change of the wind. In Unsworth's story Sisipyla, the young slave of Iphigenia, plans to die in her place, as she sees that one can decide anything, but Iphigenia becomes convinced by the rhetoric of Odysseus and goes to her death as to her own destiny. The slave girl walks free in the end. She comes to represent freedom of choice and the princess is doomed by her acceptance of the traditional myth of sacrifice.

For this study the emphasis is on the extent to which aspirations can unlock agency, and on the ways in which adaptation can prevent such unlocking of agency. In this discussion I shall firstly explore the issues of "frameworks of thought" and of autonomy [49] as two key components in the discussion on adaptive preferences. Elster (1983:2) says in this regard: "Autonomy is for desires what judgment is for belief". I interpret this statement to mean that a belief system is formed from one's judgments, and that one's desires (or aspirations) can be best fulfilled by autonomous choice.[50] Secondly I think that Elster joins these two concepts in one statement because there is an underlying connection between them, namely that autonomous choice is often prevented, or at least facilitated, by belief systems. If we return to the statement made by Teschl and Comim (2005:233) that adaptive preferences are about those processes "that prevent the free exercise of individuals' autonomous choices" it supports this assumption that adaptation hinges on the issue of autonomy – that the freedom to think as well as to act according to one's own insight and will, and from an internal locus of validation, would therefore limit adaptive behaviour. This is borne out by Colburn's similar conclusion (Colburn, 2011).

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[49] Autonomy will be more fully discussed under agency in chapter five.

[50] Colburn (2011:54) formulates his understanding of this statement along similar lines: "The standard that beliefs must live up to is that of formation through sound judgment on the basis of the available evidence. The standard that desires must live up to is that of autonomy".

In his much discussed book *Sources of the Self*, Charles Taylor (1989:14-16) writes that modern identity is different from what went before in a number of ways, but importantly in the questions a modern person can ask about life, and the meaning of life. "There are questions about how I am going to live my life which touch on the issue of what kind of life is worth living, or what kind of life would fulfil the promise implicit in my particular talents, or the demands incumbent on someone with my endowment, or of what constitutes a rich, meaningful life" (Taylor, 1989:14). I would suggest that it is this active reflection on what one can do with one's life which (partly) constitutes Sen's notion of a valued life, and also Elster's "character planning". Taylor then signifies that capacity as "modern". These questions, he says, could arise for people in any culture. "But…some framework stands unquestioned which helps define the demands by which they judge their lives and measure, as it were, its fullness or emptiness" (Taylor, 1989:16). To the extent that the traditional framework "stands unquestioned", and to the extent that the individual adheres to that framework, the individual is less free to ask how her personal life could take its fullest form, and fulfil the potential of her personal and individual talents and entitlements. Within a strict cultural or religious framework individuals would have less individual autonomy, while within a more modern framework, where the individual selects to support beliefs which would fit into a more personal framework, there would be more freedom to live a life according to what one values or has reason to value. Are traditions and cultural norms invariably restrictive? In the analysis of the findings of this study it will be seen that cultural norms are seen by the participating women as both supportive and as restrictive, that gender norms which restrict women are seen to be the most damaging, and that the women actively engage in changing these norms.[51] One would thus have to keep in mind that these frameworks are never absolute, as will be seen in future chapters. It would also be appropriate to consider Khader's insight that the identification of adaptation could reveal elitist attitudes and judgments on the part of the researcher, and that researchers have to take care to be as objective as possible (Khader, 2009:184).

Having discussed the two central issues of frameworks of thought and of autonomy, I shall now review some of the *mechanisms* by which adaptation is effected, and also some other key issues on adaptation from recent literature. In the previous section Elster's view was discussed that habituation and resignation are the *key mechanisms* through which adaptation manifests. Habituation is strongly related to the frameworks of thought within which one had been socialised, and which were discussed above. Resignation is an internal response to such excluding norms, by which the individual passively accepts the negative terms which do not include her. On an internal level the process of resignation can take place through any of a number of defense mechanisms, originally identified by Freud and reorganised by Vaillant (1995), amongst others. Defense mechanisms are ways in which most people deal with issues which they are not ready to openly confront, for whatever reason, and offer a way to escape the anxiety which the choice or the issue evokes. Examples of the most commonly used defense mechanisms are projection, rationalisation, intellectualisation, repression,

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[51] See chapter nine.

reaction formation (doing the opposite of that one really wants to do), withdrawal, or sublimation (using the energy of the frustration to rather achieve something positive). Any of these defense mechanisms can be used as psychological tools in the processes of habituation or resignation, and they are usually used on an unconscious or at least a non-reflective level. They could also be used deliberately, especially in the case of the more mature mechanisms such as sublimation, which would indicate a higher level of self-awareness, and thus less adaptation.

Some of the recent literature on adaptation which has relevance for the assessment of adaptation in this study will lastly be reviewed. This will not be a comprehensive literature review on adaptation, but a focus on material which might be applicable to this study. Clark raises the point that reflection depends on access to at least some forms of information which the poor might not have. This would obviously raise serious concerns from the point of view of participation in poverty reduction programmes and also from the perspective of possible adaptation. Nevertheless, Chambers and others have pointed out that it is quite clear in work with the poor that they have knowledge and understanding of their own conditions, and so this need not be a serious concern (Clark, 2009:25). Furthermore Clark makes the important observation that the literature reveals that adaptation is not ubiquitous (Clark, 2009:34) and that there might therefore be many situations where it will not been found. The multidimensional analysis of adaptation in three secluded rural areas of South Africa done by Barr and Clark (2011:111-136) shows that individuals partially adapted to low incomes and low educational achievements, but not to poor health services, possibly because they tended to appreciate the importance of good health services as they saw health problems in others (Barr and Clark, 2011:131-132). In another analysis of the same material Qizilbash and Clark (2008) pursue a different measurement goal, namely to indicate a way of determining core poverty, but again assess possibilities of adaptation in the three rural populations. They judge that the respondents have adapted to poor housing conditions, as not only about two thirds of those who lived in shacks considered that one could get by in a shack, but about one quarter of those who lived in houses thought the same. This would then be suggestive of, but not conclusive evidence, of adaptation.[52] In the fields of health and education, there does not seem to be adaptation. The authors admit that the conclusions are limited by their methodology, by the lack of comparison to qualitative responses, and by the lack of information on the period of deprivation these respondents had been subject to (Qizilbash and Clark, 2008:534-539). More qualitative responses might particularly have thrown light on why not all people saw a brick house as essential, and as this is the only indication of possible adaptation in this sample, the authors' conclusion that the evidence is suggestive yet inconclusive seems reasonable.

One last contribution by Clark is that of "upward" adaptation, where an exposure to a better standard motivates people to raise their expectations, rather than to adapt (Clark, 2009).

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[52] Some Khayelitsha respondents have indicated that there are advantages to having a shack over having a brick house, such as the fact that one can extend and create a space as large as you need (Conradie, 1992), so this does not necessarily have to point to adaptation.

Conradie and Robeyns (2013, p.565, footnote 4) suggest the term 'seemingly overambitious aspirations' instead of upward adaptation, as this adaptation does not occur in relation to changes in the life of the person herself, but in comparison to others he or she is exposed to. Such upward adjustment of one's aspirations when confronted with others who have been successful corresponds to Ray's "aspirations window" and this will be further explored in chapter five (Ray, 2003).

The process of adaptation has also been investigated by Tania Burchardt using the 1970 British Cohort Study, where young people were followed from birth to age 26. At various points in the questionnaire done at age 16 respondents were asked about their work intentions in the future. Three findings are made: Agency goals, based on aspirations for future employment, are adaptive. Secondly, these findings present perverse results, as utility-based assessments may do. Thirdly this casts doubt on the assumption that equivalent capability sets produce genuine equality (Burchardt, 2009:16). The reason for the problem is that "the choice is not independent of previous conditions of inequality. Identical capability sets do not afford the same real chance, in practice, of achieving valuable functionings, and the reason for this difference is aspirations formed in previous unequal and unjust conditions" (*Ibid*: 9). This is a valuable observation which will be taken into account in the analysis of the Khayelitsha project.

Adaptation is thus the result of a combination of factors – of habituation or socialisation, of lack of autonomy, of personality traits and of skills in dealing with challenges. These would shape the way in which the person would either engage with the problem or choose resignation as a strategy. To reflectively and consciously deal with the problem would be the psychologically as well as ethically preferred way. Denial of the problem or of one's capacity to deal with it and the acceptance of a lesser outcome would signify adaptation. This might in some cases lead to greater peace of mind as it might be accompanied by less frustration, but could likewise have negative psychological consequences and lead to depression, or to anomie and alienation (Brinker and Crim, 1982). In assessments of adaptation a historical perspective is needed as adaptation might have occurred in different historical conditions. This conclusion is once again of vital importance in this study.

The difficult issue of determinism touched on by Khader (2009) remains largely un-discussed in the literature. She argues that adaptive preferences as presented in the literature suggest that they are not what people truly prefer, "but what they have been 'made to prefer'" (Khader, 2009:169). This therefore implies non-voluntary action, and a possible form of determinism. It is assumed that it is more beneficial for an individual to deal with a problem by confronting it consciously and deliberately (Elster, 1983). There are however conditions which could constrain this capacity, and whether this would always constitute adaptation, and also whether it is a call for a researcher to make, remains unclear.

The definition and discussion of adaptation is an important part of the preparation for the assessment of the women's capabilities, and will be returned to in later chapters.

3.4 The use of agency in the capability approach

Agency is a central component of the capability approach, and this centrality emphasises the importance of pro-active and autonomous choices and actions of individuals towards individual and collective well-being. The theoretical use of the term agency has however developed over time and this development will be reviewed in some detail under section II in chapter four, when the use of agency is reviewed in the field of economics. For the purpose of showing how Sen responded to these debates, the nature of agency in economics will be briefly summarised here.

Through the writings of Hobbes, Smith and particularly the 19th century writers such as Mill, the premise was accepted that human beings are essentially self-interested, although Oakley (1994) has argued convincingly that Smith and Mill merely adopted the argument in order to remain relevant in the stylised debate of their time, and in truth both held a very different view of humankind. The theoretical assumption of human self-interest was then used by utilitarians such as Bentham, Jevons, Edgeworth and others to formulate the philosophy of the discipline of economics (Alkire and Deneulin, 1998:4). Two problems were transmitted to the modern world by means of these ideas. Firstly, a highly stylized historical debate on the nature of human beings (as only self-interested) is interpreted as a real one in our time, in a reified way. "[*H*]*omo œconomicus* was constructed on the basis of real elements of human nature, as a 'double' – much as a sketch of a skeleton does depict real elements of the human body. Then economists came to use *homo œconomicus* independently, and in this way breathed an autonomous existence into this abstracted set of assumptions" (Alkire and Deneulin, 1998:4). Secondly, modern economic debates are still argued in terms of self-interest and utility.

Sen has not left this problem unattended. The first action he took was to state the nature of the problem, against the general consensus (Sen, 1977; 1987). Then he attempted to find a solution which would fit into the terms of the traditional debate, and yet break new ground. He introduced the notion of non-selfinterested agency into the discussion in two different forms: *sympathy*, in which the concern for others directly affects one's own welfare, as in the case of feeling deeply upset by torture; and *commitment*, where one is not personally affected by the problem, but feels strongly enough to take action to put a stop to it. Sympathy would be more egoistic or self-interested, as a change in the situation would immediately affect the person's own welfare. In the case of a commitment the person could experience a lower level of anticipated personal welfare than would have been the case if he had decided not to act from a sense of commitment, due to the demands of the commitment. (The definition excludes acts where the person failed to foresee the consequences.) The fact that the choice exercised by the committed person leads to lower personal welfare is significant here, as much traditional economic theory relies on the connectedness between personal choice and self-interest. This basic link is severed when commitment is introduced, and it could be important in decisions regarding public goods (Sen, 1977:326-330, 1987). Sen's introduction of the terms *sympathy* and *commitment* therefore introduce a first breach in the wall of the traditional argument.

The next phase in the evolution of the concept "agency" in the capability approach came with the introduction of the distinction between well-being and agency (Sen, 1985a) which allowed a more complete break with the narrow confines created by the claim that all humans are primarily egoistic and centred on self-interest (Crocker and Robeyns, 2010:76). Sen introduces this theme by stating that he will use 'well-being as informational foundation', or WAIF for short. Well-being is however insufficient as a measure, and would be an example of informational monism, which would be "a crude prejudice". Not all human activities are aimed at maximising well-being, and agency is an important second consideration, expressing notions of "autonomy" and "personal liberty" (Sen, 1985a:186). This use of both the terms well-being and agency as informational sources does not imply that they are unrelated – they are almost inevitably deeply related. "The person's actual *use* of her well-being freedom will depend *inter alia* on her agency objectives (since these will influence her actual choices)" (Sen, 1992:72). Well-being and agency however need to be distinguished (Sen, 1985a:187). Further, if achieved well-being is the transformation of goods into valuable functionings, there can be considerable interpersonal variation in how different individuals manage to do so. As the actual freedom to choose between opportunities or different capabilities is important in itself – "the idea that the good life is inter alia also a life of freedom" (Sen, 1985a:202) – agency manifests as the ability and autonomy to select those capabilities which one values, and to perform the activities required to turn those valued goals into actual beings and doings. Wellbeing freedom would then be the opportunity for beings and doings, and agency freedom would be the opportunity for autonomy, connected to values and goals: "A person's 'agency freedom' refers to what the person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important. A person's agency aspect cannot be understood without taking note of his or her aims, objectives, allegiances, obligations, and - in a broad sense – the person's conception of the good" (Sen, 1985a:203). The choice of certain preferred activities based on such values and goals would enable the individual to attempt to achieve the selected beings and doings, and thereby achieve agency. Agency freedom is less specific than well-being freedom, as it is generally not associated with one specific type of goal. It relies instead on the judgment of a responsible agent, in a well-considered, reflective assessment of the situation, which also includes the element of responsibility (Sen, 1985a:203-204). If the assessment of the individual therefore shifts from checking the 'well-ness' of the person to checking *how well* she had pursued the objectives she had preciously decided on in a reasoned, evaluative process, the evaluation is an assessment of *agency achievement*, rather than of well-being achievement (Sen, 1984:276). The 'how well' question contains sub-components of motivation and ability or skill, which should therefore be included in the definition of agency. In summary, "the well-being aspect of a person is important in assessing a person's *advantage*, whereas the agency aspect is important in assessing what a person can do in line with his or her conception of *the good*. The ability to do more good need not be to the person's advantage." (Sen, 1985:206).

A last important dynamic in this regard is the question whether freedom relates to power or to control, which are two constituting elements of the idea of freedom. The element of power, or *effective power*, indicates whether a person is free to exercise a choice; whether his or her

choices will be respected and whether the related things will happen. Whether he or she has *procedural control* asks whether he or she is actively engaged in choosing and executing the decision. For this consideration it does not matter whether the goal is achieved or not. Procedural control is often seen as the main consideration in relation to autonomy of choice, but effective power can be seen as equally important (Sen, 1985:208-211). As an example, the power of Khayelitsha residents to vote has been established in the 1994 constitution of South Africa, and the Independent Electoral Commission oversees this freedom and ensures that all constitutional requirements are being met. Khayelitsha residents are therefore assured of procedural control over their freedom to vote. Whether this procedural control also implies effective power, which would ensure that their vote achieves a set of political goals, is more dubious, and arguably more important. By including the notion of power in the definition of agency, Sen ensures a layered and critical analysis of agency and action, as proposed by Habermas (1984).

In *Inequality Reexamined* Sen (1992:56-58) returns to the analysis of agency, and here explores the achievement of goals and values by means of one's own efforts, by playing an active part in a bigger programme. This participatory role can be seen both in '*realised* agency success' and in '*instrumental* agency success'. If one participated in a struggle for national freedom, the achievement of that goal would be realised agency success, while the particular role one played in the process would be instrumental agency success. Crocker and Robeyns (2010:77) question whether these broad goals which are achieved by others on one's behalf can be seen as agency. "Hypothetical or non-efficacious conditional agency is not actual agency" (Croker and Robeyns, 2010:78). This is indeed a valid concern, and supports Crocker and Robeyns' view that the abandonment of the concept of 'realised agency' in Sen's recent work is no loss (Crocker and Robeyns, 2010:79).

Another important development in the theorisation of agency is that from 1985 onwards, and specifically after 1992, Sen emphasises a *normative* account of agency. In this account agency is based on reflective consideration of one's values and views of 'the good', and on action which is not only in one's self-interest but also potentially altruistic (Crocker and Robeyns, 2010:76). This includes a "complex ideal of agency" which Crocker and Robeyns base on Sen's "scattered remarks" (*Ibid*:80) and which is related to empowerment. The following four conditions apply to this extended notion of agency which Sen draws on in his later works: self-determination, reason orientation and deliberation, action, and impact on the world. "Rather than make each one of these four conditions necessary and together sufficient for agency, let us say that the more fully an agent's action fulfills each condition, the more fully is that act one of agency" (Crocker and Robeyns, 2010:80).

Drydyk (2008) does not think that 'impact on the world' is necessarily part of agency, and sees that more as empowerment, which he argues should be seen as a separate concept in the capability approach. He views agency as the ways in which a person is *autonomously involved in her own activities,* while empowerment is "the process…of engaging with power, and it is empowering to the degree that people's agency is thereby engaged to increase their

well-being freedom in a durable way" (Drydyk 2008:13). Agency, in this view, is an input into the process, and empowerment is an outcome.

Motivation might further be seen as an important part of agency. Alkire and Deneulin (1998) suggest that motivations should be classified as commitments, both in the case of intrinsic and in the case of external motivations.[53] Intrinsic motivations can for instance be the need to show mastery, while external motivation can be the need for financial reward. Alkire and Deneulin then name a few intrinsic motivations which might be included because they cannot be entirely reduced to self-interest, even if some of them might include self-interest. These are *philia* and altruism, identity or self-expression, moral rules and virtues, social norms and the motivation to please others, and *long-term self-interest* (Alkire and Deneulin, 1998:11-17).[54]

Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) take on the challenge to devise internationally comparable indicators for agency and empowerment, which they see as two distinct but closely related concepts. They start with a list of 29 definitions of empowerment, and proceed to describe empowerment as "an expansion of agency" (*Ibid*, 2007:384). They make use of Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985) and suggest the following indicators for four possible exercises of agency which could lead to empowerment:
- Empowerment as control: control over personal decisions
- Empowerment as choice: domain-specific autonomy and household decision-making
- Empowerment in community: changing aspects in one's life (individual level)
- Empowerment as change: changing aspects in one's life (communal level) (Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007:388).

Frances Cleaver wrote a useful paper on agency in collective action from a capability perspective, with reference to participatory approaches to natural resource management. Some ideas are incorporated from sociology, especially from the work of Giddens, and six factors are posed which could constrain and enable the role of agency in different people. These are cosmologies, complex individual identities, the unequal interdependence of livelihoods, structure and voice, embodiment and emotionality (Cleaver, 2007).

Alkire (2008, 2009) further makes a valuable contribution to the clarification of concepts and measures of agency, particularly in the context of poverty reduction studies (2008:7). Agency is "inescapably plural in concept and hence in measurement" (Alkire, 2009:456), as agency is per definition "*a person's ability to act on things which she values or has reason to value*" (Alkire, 2009:468, my cursive). Two distinct aspects of agency can be identified: autonomy, or whether one can act on what one values, (irrespective of whether one has reason to value

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[53] This seems potentially confusing, as the use of the term commitment differs here from how Sen (1977) uses it, and it seems better to use the term motivation in this context.
[54] I shall not take these forward in this study as I propose a different set of dimensions for the study of agency.

them); and ability, or whether one is able to act on things one is presumed to have reason to value (irrespective of whether one personally values them) (Alkire, 2009:468).

Two diagrams will now be introduced to clarify the role of agency in the capability approach. If Ingrid Robeyns' stylised representation of a person's capability set (Robeyns, 2005a:98) is used to observe how a capability set can accrue, one can also attempt to see what the role of agency would be in that process.
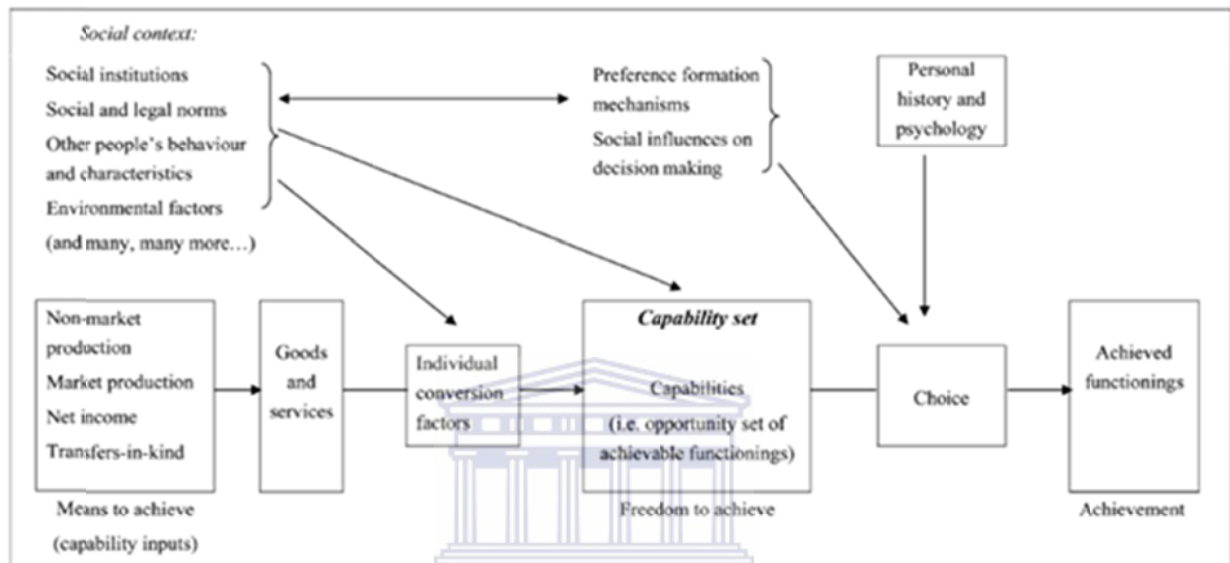
FIGURE 1. A stylised non-dynamic representation of a person's capability set and her social and personal context.

If an individual were to be assessed according to the above diagram, active agency only becomes part of this process when she exercises a choice in order to achieve a functioning. Before that point, she interacts with institutional systems, which would of course have been created by the agency of many people, and maybe even by her own agency as well. In the process of utilising her capability set, however, her interaction with different social institutions and different conversion factors all constitute influences on her capability set. This shapes the "opportunity set of achievable functionings" on which she draws to exercise choice. Only in this act of choice does she activate her agency. This will then lead to achieved functionings.

A second diagram was devised by Crocker and Robeyns (2010:62) to show how well-being and agency operate in relation to achievements and freedom. With this diagram they therefore show how four key theoretical elements in the capability approach relate to each other: well-being, agency, functionings and capabilities. Their original diagram only contains the headings, and I have now extended it by inserting references to theoretical contributions by other capability scholars on agency. As I do not deal with well-being assessment here, I have only looked at literature on agency in the capability approach. I retain the other columns as it situates agency within the conceptual framework provided by Sen (1985a) and graphically

illustrated by Crocker and Robeyns (2010). The first column on the left refers to the achievement/freedom distinction in the capability approach. The second column deals with achieved well-being and the capability for well-being, which is not discussed here. The third column looks firstly at the nature of agency in the capability approach, then at different suggestions in the capability literature on dimensions for agency achievements, and then at the capability of an individual to achieve these dimensions.

Diagram 2: The use of agency in the capability approach

	Well-being:	Agency: capacity for • reflective judgment, concept of the good • pursuit of objectives • autonomy/personal liberty
Achievements	Functionings; beings, doings	Agency achievements • autonomy in choice • success in pursuit of goals (Sen, 1984:276) • values (Gasper, 2002) • skills (Gasper, 2002) • abilities (Alkire, 2009:468) • motivation (Gasper, 2002; Alkire & Deneulin, 1998)
Freedom • effective power • procedural control	Opportunities to be or to do Opportunities to pursue well-being goals	Opportunities/capabilities/freedom for the above

There are a number of issues which are as yet unresolved in the field of agency as used in the capability approach (Crocker and Robeyns, 2010:85). Alkire and Ibrahim's work on indicators and measures of agency has to be extended; conceptions of autonomy should be integrated into work on agency, and individual and collective agency should be more deeply theorised. More normative work is also required, which would also add to the insights on the role of agency in social mobilisation and democratisation. Des Gasper maintains that there are many significant issues which could be part of agency, but which have not been included in Sen's analysis of agency, such as values and motives (Gasper, 2002:447).

Although Martha Nussbaum does not analyse agency as a separate dynamic in her version of the capability approach, she distinguishes between *basic capabilities*, which are rudimentary capabilities; *internal capabilities*, which is mature readiness; and *combined capabilities*, where the internal capabilities can combine with suitable external conditions to enable certain functionings (Nussbaum, 2000:84-85). Gasper, following Nussbaum, introduced two forms

of capabilities, namely opportunity capabilities (o-capabilities) and skills capabilities (s-capabilities), the latter related to agency (Gasper, 2003; Van Staveren and Gasper, 2002). In this dissertation the discussion on agency in the capability appraoch is however broadly limited to the work of Sen and to those who elaborated on it.

Sen has played a very valuable role in current debates on agency by freeing the concept from its initial conceptual "straitjacket" and by introducing other-regarding concepts, such as 'sympathy' and 'commitment'. The theorisation of the relationship between well-being and agency, both with regard to functionings and with reference to capabilities, has especially provided a comprehensive and coherent framework for understanding the interaction between the various key terms in the capability approach. In addition, the analysis of how power and control operate provides a useful tool. Furthermore, the use of agency as a normative term in deliberative democratisation is useful in the field of policy formulation and analysis.

For the purpose of this study, the overview of the use of agency in the capability approach has provided information on how agency was introduced into the approach by Sen, what the current definitions and uses of agency are, and what lacunae exist in this regard. For the qualitative ethnographic data analysis which this study requires, it might however be useful to have a broader range of theoretical tools in addition to those that have been discussed. These might answer different questions, such as how one can understand the agency of respondents in their own terms. In the next chapter the use of agency will therefore be explored in related disciplines, and I shall draw conclusions on how agency theories both from the capability approach and from other disciplines can usefully contribute to an agency analysis in the capability approach.

3.5 The assessment of capabilities in development projects

As the study under discussion in this dissertation deals with the assessment of functionings and capabilities in a development project, a number of published studies which have had similar aims will be reviewed here, with an emphasis on the methodology which was followed in each case. It has to be emphasised that the list of projects dealt with here will not be exhaustive.

Robeyns raises a number of important potential pitfalls which can be encountered in adapting the capability approach for grassroots work. Firstly it should not be used as an all-encompassing approach or as an ideology that has major pretensions, such as solving all possible problems. Secondly, it is useful to ask what the capability approach can and cannot do in such an application. It offers a coherent, well-integrated and ethically founded theoretical framework, developed within philosophy and the social sciences, but is also open to receiving knowledge from other fields, in areas where it lacks that knowledge. In this openness, it is opening a 'sociological turn' in economics (Robeyns, 2010:256). This allows an interdisciplinary or post-disciplinary discourse, in which essentially different disciplines can communicate and add insights to established views. This will especially apply when practical applications are done (Robeyns, 2010:254-257).

A significant practical application of the capability approach has been done by Sabina Alkire in Pakistan between 1996 and 1997, and was written up in her book "*Valuing Freedoms*" (2002). This study took the form of a cost-benefit analysis of three grassroots income generating activities, loans for goat breeding and rose cultivation in two different rural areas, as well as an adult literacy class linked to community development and income generation in the depressed peri-urban areas of Lahore. This study was undertaken as a cost-benefit assessment, but simultaneously as a facilitated intervention which created opportunities for the women. Alkire developed a methodology which was extensively used by the NGO in which she did her fieldwork, in which the participants selected functionings and dimensions for well-being assessment by means of facilitated discussions. The income generating activities were then undertaken. The assessment of these activities was done both by the participating people, as well as by the community as a whole, which was asked to indicate what positive or negative impacts they had noticed. The facilitator also enquired about the less reported impacts, and in the next round ranking was done by individual participants and by groups. By monitoring the set of key dimensions chosen, evaluated and ranked by the participants, the researcher then showed how the expansion and contraction of functionings and capabilities occurred within the framework of a standard economic evaluation. The capability assessment could only provide an ordinal ranking, but did provide important additional information which would not have been available in an ordinary cost-benefit analysis. The participants indicated how the interpersonal interaction in some projects benefitted them, how intangible dimensions such as the smell of the roses affected them positively, and how their insights had changed. The methodology was therefore less exact than a standard economic assessment would have been, but offered other valuable functionings and capabilities (Alkire, 2002:199-232; Robeyns, 2010:245-246).

In 2005 Alsop and Heinsohn undertook a study for the World Bank on assessing empowerment in terms of the capability approach. They define 'empowerment' as the capacity to make effective choices, or choices that translate into desired outcomes (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:6). They hypothesise that the capacity to make such effective choices are associated with opportunity structures and with agency, which they define as "the capacity to make meaningful choice" (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:7). Agency is then measured as *asset endowment*, with seven sets of indicators: psychological, organisational, informational, material, social, financial and human. These assets can be mutually interactive, for instance a woman with land and education can make different choices from one who lacks one of those assets. Opportunity structures consist of a range of social structures, particularly formal and informal institutions. Empowerment is measured by assessing whether a person has the opportunity to exercise a choice (existence of choice); whether she has exercised choice (use of choice), and whether there have been successful outcomes (achievement of choice) (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:6-10). This is an example of the creative use of the capability "toolbox" to achieve concrete and useful outcomes, based on the central notions of choice, freedom of choice, and opportunities. Alsop and Heinsohn use the concept of agency in ways which they find useful, by focussing on material and non-material assets which facilitate choice. In the process they devise a practical and interesting tool.

As part of the same World Bank study, Alsop, Bertelsen and Holland (2005) report on the application of the same instrument in the evaluation of five empowerment studies conducted in Brazil, Ethiopia, Honduras, Indonesia and Nepal. They use agency as a sociological construct, and show that the engagement of agency brought about positive development outcomes in all these country studies, albeit with differing success (Alsop, Bertelsen and Holland, 2005:24).

In a study which records the activities of three self-help groups in Egypt, Solava Ibrahim analyses the link between individual capabilities and social structures. The groups are likewise from marginalised and excluded communities, which had formed self-help groups with the assistance of an international organisation, a local NGO and the Islam community in a third case. With this external assistance, the poor managed to exercise 'collective capabilities' which improved their situation. Ibrahim then proceeds to theorise an operational framework for collective self-help initiatives based on the capability approach, making use of collective agency, institutions and social capital, and finds that the capability approach is a suitable but insufficient framework for such analysis (Ibrahim, 2006).

Schischka, Dalziel and Saunders (2008) report on two project evaluations in focus groups, in which the capability approach has been used. In this study the socially marginalised participants of a community garden project in Christchurch in New Zealand reported social, physical and psychological gains, although not economic gains. The second group consisted of economically marginalised women and youth in Samoa, who participated in an income generating project. All groups reported an increased income, and many spoke about psychological gains such as a sense of pride. The qualitative discussions assisted reflective participation, generated useful information for the hosting organisation, and enabled the researchers to make qualitative evaluation gradings. These evaluations were inspired by the work of Alkire (Schischka *et al*:244).

Dorothea Kleine (2009) devised a "Choice Framework", inspired by the work of Alsop and Heinsohn (2005). She draws on the Sustainable Livelihoods approach, as well as on the capability approach with its core idea of the freedom of choice. Kleine provides a useful dual terminology for these two approaches, shows how the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach terms can be translated into capability approach terminology,[55] and thus how the two approaches partly dovetail. The "Choice Framework" consists of a triangle: development outcomes, structure and agency. In the middle of the triangle she puts choice as a focal issue, and specifies four dimensions of choice which can be measured: the existence of choice, the sense of choice, the use of choice, and the achievement of choice. Agency is seen as Alsop and Heinsohn use it, as resources in the form of "individual agency-based capability inputs" (Kleine, 2009:111), which, together with structure-based capability inputs, can be converted into capabilities. There is thus an integration of sociological theory constructs into the

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[55] Kleine uses the capability term "resources" to replace the term "capital" in the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach.

capability approach, which enriches the latter. She employed the framework as part of an extensive ethnographic study on how micro-entrepreneurs in Chile were affected by state ICT policies. Because the research participants gave individual and personal responses, outcomes indicate personal choice and outcomes of choice succinctly (Kleine, 2009:112). This framework is another example of the creative application of the capability approach in collaboration with other approaches, in this case the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach and social theory constructs.

A number of other research projects have since been undertaken on internet and communication by means of the capability approach. Some of these are Zheng (2009), which studies different spaces for e-development and capabilities; Hamel (2010), a study undertaken for UNDP on Information and Communication Technology seen within the human development approach and using the capability approach; and Lindquist (2013), an imaginative Master's thesis on the outcomes in capability terms of the use of Facebook in Zimbabwe.

The capability approach can thus clearly be developed for praxis (Deneulin, 2006:14) but a praxis based on the capability approach and on capability expansion is not yet extensively established as a practice in the development field. It might be for the reason offered by Ibrahim (2006), that it is not sufficient to build such activities on the capability approach alone. If the approach would be combined with other well-developed intervention approaches, such as a Freirean approach, any of the approaches developed by Robert Chambers, the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, as done by Kleine, or similar well developed praxis-based theoretical perspectives based on similar values as the human development approach, the combination of a solid ethical-theoretical base and a practice component would be likely to be highly successful.

3.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I discussed the capability approach, the theoretical framework of the study, primarily as it was developed by Amartya Sen. Special attention was given to individualism in the approach, as well as to adaptation and to agency, as these phenomena will be important for the analysis of the project which is under discussion in the dissertation. Individual assessments have clear value, as each individual can be clearly seen in the assessment. It is nevertheless important to also consider social influences on respondents within their particular context. Adaptation of aspirations can mean that the women in the project could not be expressing their real aspirations at all, while the use of agency in the capability approach has to be clearly understood for the sake of further analysis. A number of studies which have undertaken a qualitative assessment of capabilities were lastly reviewed, to provide a research context for the model which will be developed in this study.

In the second literature review in the next chapter I shall pursue the subject of agency, and will explore how this subject has been and is used in different disciplines, in order to be able to recommend ways for the enrichment of agency in the capability approach.

Chapter four
Literature review: Agency in related disciplines
The analysis of the agency of the research respondents is a central theme in the dissertation, and in order to be able to provide theoretical support for this analysis, agency is also a focus area in the literature review. The ways in which agency has been conceptualised in the capability approach were discussed in chapter three, and the approach offers a number of conceptual tools in this regard. The theorisation of agency in other disciplines such as economics, psychology or sociology might however offer additional tools, and this possibility will be explored here. Furthermore the capability approach can be enriched by the integration of theoretical tools for an interpretative analysis of the subjective experiences of respondents. As I shall undertake such an analysis in chapter nine of this study, I shall also explore the relevant literature in this regard.

In this chapter I shall first trace the ways in which different disciplines developed from philosophy during the 19th century, and then explore how agency was conceptualised in some of the new disciplines.

4.1 Agency as used in related disciplines
4.1.1 Introduction: the development of different social disciplines
Joas (1996:1) speculates that outsiders might be surprised at the amount of energy and time which goes into the construction of a theory of action in the social sciences, when larger social issues seem so much more urgent. Yet, as Sen points out, "[t]here is a deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements. It is important to give simultaneous recognition to the centrality of individual freedom and to the force of social influences on the extent and reach of individual freedom" (Sen, 1999:xii). Joas and Knöbl (2009:18) also state that the nature of agency is one of the three central questions around which the theoretical development of the social sciences can be understood.[56] The importance of agency therefore lies in how we understand what human beings are capable of, how that understanding influences our thinking in relation to policy formulation and implementation, and how these aspects shape the world as we know it. It is in the nature of social science that our theoretical reflections do not only describe and analyse but also influence the 'real' world – what Giddens terms the 'double hermeneutic' (Giddens, 1984:284).

One of the disadvantages of increased specialisation in our time is that insights and breakthroughs in some disciplines have gone un-noticed in others, where academics continue to work on conceptual problems as if the new knowledge was not available. "The apparent absence of any link between the various debates on action theory in the different branches of the social sciences is…confusing and gives cause for mistrust. As once again becomes evident in this connection, each field constitutes a discourse on its own that more or less isolates itself from those in the other disciplines" (Joas, 1996:1). This brief review cannot

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[56] The other two questions are 'what is social order?' and 'what determines social change?' As will be seen in the discussion which follows, agency is also active in social order and social change.

attempt to address the whole of this problem, but will endeavor to summarise aspects of it. In terms of terminology, the term *social agency* will largely refer to the use of agency in sociology or in social theory, while *human agency* will mostly refer to agency in the field of psychology. This division is however not absolute, and the terms can cross over as the context allows.

Agency in the social sciences has to be seen within the perspective of the history of the origin of the social sciences, especially during the second half of the 19th century. Immanuel Wallerstein[57] (2004:316) writes that the so-called divorce between philosophy and natural science, a divisive and bitter process which occurred between about 1750 and 1850, has been decisive in the development of the social sciences. Between 1850 and 1870 the young and emerging social sciences were "the in-between terrain within which philosophy and science primarily carried out their struggle for dominance, and wherein social scientists showed remarkably little epistemological autonomy or originality" (Wallerstein, 2004:316). As the social sciences developed, these battles continued to rage, and the new young disciplines were being pulled in two directions. On the whole the disciplines took sides and became either *nomothetic*, generating and testing fundamental laws, or *idiographic,* studying individual instances or phenomena. This division is still far from being resolved. The division can possibly be seen to rest on the classical question of *Erklären* or *Verstehen* – whether science should explain or understand. *Erklären* is the *rational analysis* of what is seen to be objective reality. It originated in the natural sciences, and became associated with functionalism and structuralism in the social sciences – however large the difference between functionalism and structuralism in other ways. *Verstehen* on the other hand can be seen as the *meaningful understanding* of a phenomenon. This approach is the home of humanism and of subjectivity, in Dilthey's presentation (Giddens, 1984:1-2). Weber writes about sociology as the study of action, "in the sense of a *subjectively understandable* orientation of behaviour" (Weber, 1922:13, my cursive), and therefore from a *Verstehen* perspective. Much of his work can however also be read from an *Erklären* point of view. Over time, each of these perspectives has been influenced by the other, but they have nevertheless proven to have an enduring influence on social theory generally, and also on agency. The naturalistic theories, which included economics and the structural and functional schools in sociology and psychology, tended towards a theory of rational action, and the humanistic theories favoured normatively oriented action (Joas, 1996:4). In order to place the discussion on agency in the context of this debate, I shall first discuss the development of the influential rational choice theories in a number of disciplines.

4.1.2 The use of agency in economics

In order to be able to trace the development of the term 'agency' in the field of economics, it is necessary to start with the questions posed by the classical utilitarians. Although Thomas Hobbes already had a theory of psychological self-interest in his book "Leviathan" (1651),

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[57] Wallerstein was the chairperson of the Gulbenkian Commission on the division between the social sciences, and they published their report in book form as *Open the Social Sciences* in 1996.

eighteenth century philosopher David Hume was the originator of the term 'utility'[58], and his theory is the forerunner of the utilitarianism of the classical tradition as formulated by Smith, Bentham and Mill. Adam Smith also mentioned self-interest as the motivating factor in many economic transactions between strangers. He used a mixture of inductive and deductive techniques, but his arguments were shaped by the nature of the material he wanted to present. Although Bentham was not very influential during his lifetime, his principle of utilitarianism, which assesses motivation and value according to the utility or happiness it gives, has become very important into our time. His largely empirical study of human nature holds that what is fundamentally valuable and what primarily motivates us is to gain pleasure and to avoid pain. James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill, and Riccardo, who came after Smith, however "shifted the immediate imperative in the design of political economy from providing for empirical accuracy to ensuring consistency with the principles of axiomatic-deductive methodology. It was now methodological predilections and ambitions that were driving economic analysis and the representation of the object phenomena was moulded to fit the demands thereof by whatever degree of abstraction from reality was required" (Oakley, 1994:x, also see Alkire and Deneulin, 1998).

Within this framework it was John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) who did a considerable amount to establish the term utility. He starts by defining utility as the "Greatest Happiness Principle" (Mill, 1991:137), in which he strongly defends the fact that happiness and the absence of pain is the purpose of action. He then proceeds to develop a two-tiered concept, in that utility should be applied only at the critical, and not at the practical level. Moreover, pleasure is defined in a broad way to include 'higher' pleasures: "But there is no known Epicurean theory of life which does not assign to the pleasures of the intellect, of the feelings and imagination, and of the moral sentiments, a much higher value as pleasures than to those of mere sensation" (Mill, 1991:138). Gray (1991:xiv) maintains that Mill initially steered the Benthamite utilitarianism of mental states of pleasure and pain in the direction of the *eudaimonism* of Aristotle, based on the common and universal nature of men. Later he however revised this and maintained that, "for each of us, the good life is that in which he fulfills the demands of the nature that is distinctively his own" (Gray, 1991:xiv). In spite of his Aristotelian roots, Mill is in fact usually read as a classical utilitarian who has somewhat modified Bentham's extreme position (Joas and Knöbel, 2009:26-27). Mill's work has been very influential, but also much criticised. His Principle of Utility is not, according to Gray (1991:xi) of the same standard as other parts of "Utilitarianism", and merely repeats Bentham's notion of the selfishness of all human endeavors. Sidgwick criticised this notion and suggested "an ultimate dualism of practical reason between egoistic and practical concerns" (Gray, 1991:xi).

One other theoretical milestone has to be mentioned. During the second half of the 19th century the *theory of marginal utility* was formulated by Jevons in England, and by Menger

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[58] *Utility* can be seen as "the basic unit of desirability" while utilitarianism is "the ethical theory…that answers questions of what to do, what to admire, or how to live, in terms of maximizing utility or happiness" (Blackburn, 1994:388).

and Walrus on the continent. In order to try to limit the intervention of the state in the market, these theorists advocated that value theory be re-assessed in order to exclude an objective value assessment, in favour of a subjective one. Value would now be assessed by analysing individual preferences and resources. This had a revolutionary impact on the understanding of the division of labour and of private property, and played a very important role in keeping poorer classes poor and excluded in the 19th century. It also led to the adoption of many of the methods of classical economic theory (Joas, 1996:36-37).

The thread therefore runs from the ideas of Aristotle, and through those of Hobbes, Smith, Hume, Bentham and Mill, via the debates of the late 19th century between Spenser and Sidgwick, to Edgeworth's response to the debate in his *Mathematical Psychics*, published in 1881. In this paper, Edgeworth argued that of the two fundamental principles, self-interest and utilitarianism, self-interest is the primary one for his inquiry. He established that by proving the inappropriateness of utilitarianism to describe actual behaviour. Sen notes that this was a highly stylised debate, and that Edgeworth probably did not think that all human beings were completely egoistic, except in the two activities to which he applied his "economical calculus": war, and contracts (Sen, 1977:318). The significance of these debates however lies particularly in the fact that "the view of man which forms part of Edgeworth's analysis…survives more or less intact in much of modern economic theory" (Sen, 1977:321). Alkire and Deneulin (1998:1) describe this view of man, *homo œconomicus*, as a view of humankind without the substance of real life – "he excludes the complex of motivations that people have – from cooperation to self-interest to altruism to attention-getting playfulness". A second implication is that the *central questions of this debate* also survive in much modern economic theorisation, namely how and to what extent self-interested behaviour would achieve general good. In this respect Sen (1977:321) quotes from a general text by Arrow and Hahn, published in 1971: "There is by now a long and fairly imposing line of economists from Adam Smith to the present who have sought to show that a decentralised economy motivated by self-interest and guided by price signals would be compatible with a coherent disposition of economic resources that would be regarded…as superior to a large class of possible alternative dispositions". To illustrate the fact that this view persists into the 21st century, one need go no further than the World Development Report of 2006, where agency is defined as "the socioeconomically, culturally and politically determined ability to shape the world around oneself" (World Bank, 2005:5). These two problems, that the nature of human beings is pre-determined as self-interested in a stylised way, unrelated to current empirical findings, and that the central questions in the study of agency in economic debates still deal with the questions of egoism or self-interest and utility, as formulated in a different era and for different debates, obviously creates a difficulty for agency in the discipline of economics.

Efforts to address the problems of agency in economics include the theory of revealed preferences, when Samuelson proposed in 1938 that economic interests are best known not through reflection or discussion, but by means of observing preferences. "*Homo œconomicus* now maximises preference satisfaction" (Alkire and Deneulin, 1998:5). This view led to the development of *rational choice theory*, which proposes that utility is maximised in a rational way from a set of preferences (Alkire and Deneulin, 1998:6), and which turned out to become

a dominant perspective in theoretical circles, not only in economics, but also in social theory. George Homans was an early proponent of exchange theories, but also of more rational explanation, which he argued could be based on behavioural psychology and economics. He wanted to understand all social interactions as an exchange of material and non-material goods (Joas and Knöbl, 2009:101). His friend, psychologist B. F. Skinner, had already developed his behaviourism on the basis of animal experiments, and Homans linked the two theories into an explanation of human behaviour which was based on the concepts of conditioning and rational, self-interested actions. Homans was extensively criticised on the grounds that the arguments supporting his assumptions were tautological, and ignored social influences. Behaviourism itself also became more controversial, and Homans's views became contentious. His work nevertheless significantly influenced later forms of rational choice theory (Scott, 2000; Joas and Knöbl, 2009:103-107).

Two of the important theorists in these later forms of rational choice theory are Elster and Coleman. Marxist Jon Elster explores the potential of rational choice theory in different applications, and seeks to establish links between sociology, political studies, the philosophy of action and behavioural economics (Hedström and Stern, 2008:4). He attempts to spell out in detail the different forms which rational action can take, and how individuals can discipline themselves in order not to take certain actions, as in *Ulysses and the Sirens* (1979).[59] James Coleman (1990) combines his rational choice theories with a synthesis of social theories, and is highly influential because many major theoretical problems are approached from a rational choice perspective in his major work (Joas and Knöbl, 2009:120). In these rational choice theories individuals are believed to be motivated by different wants and goals, but as these cannot all be achieved, they have to make choices based on the calculated anticipation of what will be best for them. "All social action, it is argued, can be seen as rationally motivated, as instrumental action, however much it may appear to be irrational or non-rational" (Scott, 2000:2). Although the application of rational choice theory in the social sciences has been strongly criticised (Scott, 2000; Joas and Knöbl, 2009), this line of thought is nevertheless powerful and influential, as can be seen in the work of James Coleman and of Hartmut Esser (Joas and Knöbl, 2009:120).

In economics, rational choice theory represents more of a "mainstream" theory and a number of important contributions have been made in recent years. Leonard Savage wrote on decisions when the future is uncertain, while Kahneman and Tversky worked on anomalies which are created by the fact that we often make unfounded assumptions when we make choices. Gary Becker has made a considerable contribution to the formalisation and clarification of the logic of choice. In Douglass North's work environmental factors are emphasised, and Siegwart Lindenberg succeeded in extending the social parameters of the rational choice model (Wolf, 2005; Kahneman, 2011). It is important to note, though, that many of these theorists did not write from within one particular discipline, but studied rational choice across the boundaries of social theory, psychology and economics. In fact, the

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[59] Elster's work on adaptive preferences was discussed in chapter three.

work of a number of prominent economists such as Daniel McFadden, Brian Arthur and Vernon Smith shows that the social and the economic cannot be completely separated, and that rational choice is not based on linear rationality only. McFadden asks whether preferences can indeed be seen to form the basis of choice, while Arthur pays attention to the individual meanings which people bring to their choices. This means that economistic thinking, where the product determines the response, is now changing (Wolf, 2005:279-293).

Critics have used mainly three arguments to oppose rational choice theories. The principle of individualism has been criticised from the perspective that it does not allow for the influence of groups in choice situations. According to these critics the theory also makes insufficient provision for collective action. Lastly, the question is asked what role social norms play, and whether they are only, as rational choice theorists propose, arbitrary preferences (Scott, 2000:6-9).

Agency in neoclassical economics is therefore based on full rationality, and although this idea has often been disputed, "a theory of rational action nevertheless undisputedly forms the paradigmatic core of the discipline" (Joas, 1996:1). It is nevertheless important to note that prominent economists and theorists, such as Kahneman, Lindenberg, McFadden, Arthur and Smith, discussed above, are working in different ways on extending the narrow track on which the view of human agency has run in economics (Wolf, 2005).

Esther Dufflo (2006:367-378) does an interesting analysis of the ways in which the poor and their agency have been seen in modern *development economics*. The debates initially revolved around the notion of "poor but efficient", popularized by Schultz in 1964. According to this view the poor are as efficient as possible, given their circumstances, but they can only be as productive as their resources and circumstances allow. When new theoretical work made it clear that the poor were often cut off from opportunities which others enjoyed, the poor were implicitly seen as "poor but neoclassical", in other words they operated in the market like all others as rational agents, but were disadvantaged by the fact that they could not take the risks which other members of society can take. The markets were therefore seen as not efficient in redistribution and government policies had to compensate for this. Dufflo argues that in the case of, for instance, insurance and agricultural investment this theory also does not hold (Dufflo, 2006:276).

The next development in the research agenda has been the extension of the view of human agency by means of the incorporation of ideas from "behavioural economics" as proposed by Mullainathan and Thaler in 2000. They argued that the agency of the poor is deficient in three different ways: in their ability to analyse and use information, in their lesser willpower, and because they are not exclusively self-interested. Dufflo argues that the problem with testing these hypotheses has been that they were formulated in developed country settings but more difficult to test in developing countries. A number of efforts were made to do research with local NGO's in developing countries, but it is difficult to understand the exact conditions which determine behaviour when the context is so different. "Perhaps when choices involve the subsistence of one's family, trade-offs are distorted in different ways than when the

question is how much money one will enjoy at retirement. Pressure by extended family members or neighbors is also stronger when they are at risk of starvation" (Dufflo, 2006:377).

What is needed now is a theory on how poverty influences decision making, not just by posing constraints, but by changing the decision making itself (Dufflo, 2006:377). Such a theory would go some way towards creating space for the rich information of "real life" to enter into the debates, but what remains clear is that the use of agency in economics, or in this case in development economics, centres around the economic questions, and not on what agency is or could be, and also not on agency in a particular context.

The overview of agency in economics shows that the lack of an articulate theory on agency in this discipline is deeply related to developments within the political economy. There seems to be indications that this is slowly changing. For the moment economics however does not seem to be able to offer clear additional contributions to an agency theory within the capability approach.

The second discipline which will be examined is that of psychology.

4.1.3   The use of agency in psychology
4.1.3.1 Early influences

The early philosophical debates which influenced the discipline of economics so profoundly, had a similar effect on the development of psychology as a discipline, and on the view of agency in that development. Hobbes, whose interest was fundamentally in how political systems operate, reduced human nature to a physics-like model of basic matter in motion, which possesses capacity for self-direction. Furthermore, his view of the free choice of an agent was neither deterministic nor libertarian, but dissolutionist, "in that it aims to dissolve the debate between strict determinism and free will by reducing deliberative choice and action to the internal motions of the physiologically constituted person" (Martin et al, 2010:20). The rational thought experiments of Descartes formed another important influence on the early scholars of human nature. Locke saw personal identity as a combination of backward and forward looking propensities, consisting of memory (backward looking) and imagination (forward looking). For Locke, the self acted like an objective, rational, external agent, acquiring and rejecting actions like one would do with commodities. "In this way, Locke launched an empiricist psychology that viewed the self as a term that describes the observable phenomena making up individual identity and unity" (Martin et al, 2010:15).

Kant also played an important role in the conceptualisation of the self. He rejected Hobbesian materialism, and emphasised the will as the origin of much human action. In order to reconcile his views on human nature with his complex conceptual scheme, he however ascribed a dual nature to all human beings. On the one hand we are subject to natural and empirical causes through a phenomenal order of sensing, and on the other hand "we belong to a noumenal order of intelligibility in which the self is capable of rational free will through the exercise of its own causal capabilities that are original to it" (Martin et al, 2010:17). Kant's

views on humans as reasonable and intelligent beings met with much opposition in an eighteenth century world where people saw themselves as caught up in natural and social systems (Martin et al, 2010:17). As discussed before, Bentham and Mill saw the self as a utility maximizer, above anything else. The romantic turn in arts in the 19th century further created the space for the Expressionism of Gottfried Herder, an important figure in the development of thinking on human nature. He reacted to the dualism of Kant, and formulated the idea that we achieve our humanity in expressing our thoughts. These are not necessarily pre-meditated rational formulations, but expressive acts which give access to our inner being. In such expressions we discover ourselves and share our discovery with others in such a way that they can appreciate it (Joas, 1996:75-85). Herder contributes to the conceptual development of human and social action the idea of action as expressive creativity.

4.1.3.2 Agency in modern psychology

The debates referred to in the introduction to this chapter on the split between naturalistic-empirical and humanistic streams of thought in the young social sciences, also occurred in early psychology. On the one hand the *reductionists* such as Helmholz and Loeb argued that all analysis of life should be based on the rules of physics, such as "elemental or lower order efficient and material causal principles" (Ryan, Kuhl and Deci, 1997:703) rather than on biology. Their rivals were the *vitalists*, who argued that living entities have "obvious tendencies toward activity and integrity, [and] possess an irreducible, unique nature" (*Ibid*). One of the proponents of vitalism was Dreisch, who wrote in 1908 that organisms conform to the principle of *entelechy*, a guiding and organising principle of organismic potential. According to this viewpoint human beings, as organisms, have the natural inclination to grow and develop. Although the proponents on this side of the debate eventually retreated into silence, they influenced the extreme position of the reductionists, and also have much in common with later work of proponents of 'positive psychology' such as Jung, Maslow, and Rogers (Ryan, Kuhl and Deci, 1997:703-704).

This duality remained a feature of psychology and the nomothetic group has been dominant throughout the 20th century to the present, with specific dissenting schools presenting opposing views during certain periods, and with a small mutual influence occurring throughout the process. Martin, Sugarman and Hickonbottom (2010:v) observe in this regard: "…for the most part, psychologists have given little attention to the question of what a person is. Rather, in the attempt to achieve the precision and control of the natural sciences, much mainstream psychology, perhaps somewhat unreflectively, has adopted a materialist perspective that considers all psychological phenomena to be reducible to underlying biological and neuro-physical substrates and/or computational and psychometric models". During the late 19th century William James and John Dewey were the proponents of the so-called functional school, which concentrated on the physical roots of psychological behaviour. This school continued in the form of behavourism, with B F Skinner as a key proponent, and with cognitive psychology. Behaviourism, established by Skinner with his 1938 book *The Behavior of Organisms: an experimental analysis*, works on the assumption that it is better to deal with people's observable behaviour when therapeutic change has to be achieved, than with new insights, which are harder to observe and to verify. In his 1971

publication, *Beyond dignity and freedom*, Skinner clearly outlines the assumptions on which the method is founded. There is no inner, autonomous person, only experimentally verifiable behaviour, shaped by contingencies of reinforcement, and behaviour change is the only purpose of therapeutic intervention (Chirkov *et al*, 2011:15).

Currently modern cognitive psychology has taken up many of these ideas. This field of psychology deals with mental processes such as attention, memory, language, perception, problem solving, and thinking. Through the influence of Homans and also later of Kahneman the ideas of behaviourist psychology and economics have come together. Although very interesting findings are emerging from this research, there is not much evidence of agency. It might be that the insights which derive from modern behaviourist and rational choice research might eventually produce knowledge which will feed into new agency theories. For the time being behaviourist research in psychology produces a restricted type of agent.

On the other end of the spectrum, the Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud announced his term 'psycho-analysis' in 1896. For a period he worked closely with Carl Gustav Jung, but they had a difference of opinion about the exact nature of psychotherapy, and each continued on his own. Freudian psychotherapy remained a strong influence in 20th century psychology, although it was never hegemonic. Gestallt therapy offered another holistic model, but the lasting influence in this broad stream came from the humanistic school and from the Social Constructivists. The humanistic school was built on the early work of *inter alia* Maslow and Carl Rogers, and then on that of the SDT[60] theorists. Social Constructivism can be identified in a weak form, where academics translate the experiences of 'ordinary' people into an interpretative construction, and strong constructivism, where reality only exists as a social construction. Based on Wittgenstein's idea of language games, strong constructivism sees all interpretation as socio-cultural-linguistic constructions, which do not portray reality, but only these interpretative schemes. Even the idea of a personal self is held not to be possible – a person is a mere reflection of such schemes (Chirkov et al, 2011:14-22). Neither the naturalist nor the constructionist approaches can therefore offer an adequate account of personhood. "From the essentialist view, our experience of selfhood and agency is illusory, reducible to biological foundations. From the constructionist view, our experience of selfhood and agency is merely a fiction, determined by cultural scripts that might easily have been otherwise. Either way, the reality of psychological phenomena is dismissed as reducible to underlying biological or sociocultural determinants. Consequently, it becomes questionable just what, if any, role psychology has to play in furthering understanding about the human condition" (Martin *et al*, 2010:v).

Psychotherapy uses a range of techniques to activate agency. The purpose of classical psychotherapy is to reach the level of the unconscious, from where behaviour is thought to derive, according to this school. When unconscious motivation is made conscious, insight occurs, and this often leads to behaviour change. If behaviour remains unconsciously

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[60] Self-Determination Theory

motivated, it can be suppressed, which can lead to increased psychological stress. Behaviour can then also be unconsciously projected onto someone or something else, or a range of other possible defense mechanisms can be used. Although unconscious motivation probably often plays a role in manifestations of agency, it is a difficult and specialised task to work with such unconscious material. In spite of this difficulty, Parsons, Bourdieu, Giddens and Habermas all include unconscious motivation in their theories of social agency, thus recognising the importance of the work of Freud and his successors. I shall return to the ways in which Giddens and Habermas include it in their work in the section on agency in social theory in this chapter.

One form of psychotherapy which might be of special interest in studying agency is Victor Frankl's *will-to-meaning* or *logotherapy* (Frankl, 1984) [1946]. He was an Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist who survived Auschwitz, and who wrote on how meaning had assisted people to live longer in the camps. Meaning could be investigated as a universal motivator in a theory of agency, from a psychological or philosophical perspective.

The humanistic perspective which is employed by motivation psychologists is also highly relevant for the study of human action. The idea of assisting a person to reach her full potential in an eudaimonic way contains the elements of intrinsic motivation, which could be agency activating. Similarly, weak constructivism and the interpretative work which can be done within this model could also activate agency, especially if done in a participatory manner.

There is one more field in psychology which has to be mentioned in relation to agency, and that is the relatively new terrain of neuropsychology, which is a continuation of the naturalist line of investigation in psychology. Sperduti et al (2011) report that they did a quantitative meta-analysis of 15 neuro-imaging studies, including 228 subjects, to attempt to find out which parts of the brain are activated for self-agency and for external agency attribution. They found that different parts of the brain were activated for self-representation and for the recognition of someone else's agency. They also found that specific *insulae* in the brain reacted to congruent self-representation, and maintain that this strengthens the possibility that this region may be a neural substratum of the "embodied self". The brain regions which are normally associated with agency are in fact more involved in external agency attribution than in recognising own agency. The significance of this research lies not only in the specific findings, but also in the fact that when the scientific and humanistic trends in psychology are connected, both positions are affirmed. Both self-represented and externally attributed agency is recognised by our brains, although the second seems to be more pertinent, from what we know at this stage. This might be because the recognition of external agency is more important for survival.

SDT writers have relied on previous research of writers like Winnicott to theorise the integrating nature of the mature or maturing self. Again two possible interpretations are possible – the more cognitive-behaviourist view that the self can be studied as an objective phenomenon, and the phenomenological perspective that the self is rather the active,

managing centre of the personality. Organismic theories, which hold that the human organism is naturally inclined to self-integrate and grow, see integration as a central and important psychological process. Such integration is often not complete – there are elements of our goals and behaviour that are fully integrated and self-regulated, and other elements which are not. Activities such as grading papers or paying tax, where we are reliant on external deadlines, might not be fully integrated. These excluded goals are usually linked to external coercion or to external goals. A lack of integration can also be the result of prefrontal cortical neurological disruptions. In these cases, intentions often seem disconnected from the parts of the brain which have to implement them. The same lack of integration can result from highly coercive situations. "Thus, in a general sense, controlled regulation is evidenced to the extent that component systems, whether conceived of psychologically or neuro-anatomically, execute behavior without it being processed, coordinated or endorsed by the self" (Ryan, Kuhl and Deci, 1997:707). Integration is important in that it ensures a higher likelihood of perseverance, and of will, in the sense of will-to-succeed. Weakness of will, or *akrasia*, is strongly correlated to behavior which is externally controlled, as are behaviour forms such as lack of creativity and lack of cognitive flexibility (Ryan, Kuhl and Deci, 1997:706, 707). It is therefore possible to further distinguish *organisation and integration of material*, as well as *will* as possible elements of agency.

Psychological philosophers have recently attempted to initiate a discussion on the dearth of material on agency and personhood in the discipline of psychology. They have found that the term *self* which is now commonly used in relation to our inner selves, is relatively new in western culture, and often unknown in others, where *self* often refers to the enactment of cultural roles or to one's relationship to a bigger collectivity.[61] In modern western philosophy it is thought to go back to Locke's 1690 *Essay concerning human understanding*. Recently the topic *self* has become the theme of much research, but this has particularly taken the form of empirical studies, where operational indicators on self-esteem, self-concept, self-regulation and other similar subjects have been studied. These studies were however almost invariably undertaken without reference to the ontological status of the "self" in these discussions, probably because it is seen not to be a scientifically verifiable concept. There are two problems with this. Firstly, as indicated by Taylor (1989), the vocabulary and discourse of psychology is shrunk in important ways, and secondly, as popular psychological texts have a large influence on society, that influence is slanted by an overly biological approach (Martin *et al*, 2010:3-9).

In summary, possible psychological concepts which might contribute to a theory of human agency could be intrinsic (or externally integrated) motivation and an inner locus of control, which would include reflection; reinforced or conditioned behaviour; unconscious motivation; the ability to integrate divergent influences into the personality; the ability to experience meaning, and the will to act. The notion of conditioning might also be useful for

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[61] There is a possible tension here with the cross-cultural research done by SDT scholars, where no cross-cultural differences were found in relation to intrinsic motivation.

analytical purposes. This list is far from exhaustive and concentrates on findings in motivational and humanistic psychology, as well as on some insights in neuropsychology and psychotherapy.

What are the elements of personhood which are excluded from modern psychological discourse? Martin *et al* (2010:8) suggest that these can include subjects such as rights and responsibilities, the exercising of choice, and the abilities to reason and reflect, to originate one's own purposes and to act on these.[62] They therefore initiate a discussion in which they propose persons to be "embodied, reasoning and moral agents with self-consciousness and self-understanding, as well as social and psychological identity, who have unique capabilities of language and are distinctly culturally capable" (Martin *et al,* 2010:8-9).

The elements of agency which are employed in psychology and could contribute to a more general theory of agency are presented in the table at the end of this chapter. A brief account will now be given of the proposal of Martin, Sugarman and Hickonbottom (2010) for the integration of the notion of personhood into modern psychology.

4.1.3.3 A philosophical proposal for a developmental theory of situated, agentive personhood

In view of the lack of a theory of agency in psychology, Martin, Sugarman and Hickinbottom (2010) formulate a philosophical proposal on how agency could be used in psychology. In their alternative model reasons and intentions are held to be real, because of the influence they may have on human behaviour. Their model has three neo-ontological perspectives.

1. Levels of reality: The different levels of personhood are arranged along a continuum on an equal basis, not privileging the physical level. Psychological phenomena are seen to be nested within socio-cultural practices, and psychological and socio-cultural practices are nested within biological and physical levels of reality.

2. Under-determination of human agency: To deal with the technical problems presented by traditional compatibilism, a soft agency determinism is introduced. Their definition of agency is "the deliberate reflective activity of a human being in framing, choosing, and executing his/her actions in a way that is not fully determined by factors and conditions other than his/her own understanding and reasoning" (Martin et al, 2010:29). Agency is therefore a kind of self-determinism, but not in the traditional Hobbesian sense where self-determination would be dissolved too radically to determinism. "Rather, it is intended to be compatibilist in the more radical sense of demonstrating how an agentive capability in deliberation and action is compatible with a deterministic, nonmysterious, and nonreductive account of the development of human agency within biological/physical, historical and sociocultural contexts (Martin *et al*, 2010:30). Following Frankfurt, social conditioning or hereditary factors are not seen as determination, if the agent has assimilated these and made them part of his or her

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[62] There is no reference to Self Determination Theory in Martin *et al.* Many of their reservations about the lack of a theory of active personhood in psychology might have been partially addressed if they had referred to SDT.

deliberation.

3. Self as understanding: this perspective involves the reflective awareness which a person will have of herself as she engages in a life-long process of self-understanding, even as circumstances and conditions change. It also includes taking certain aspects of the self, such as beliefs, values, reasons and desires, as intentional objects. "When such second-order, self-reflective capability emerges within the contextualized, developmental trajectory of an individual life, full-fledged psychological personhood is attained" (Martin et al, 2010:32-33).

The authors therefore see *self as understanding*, and *agency as self-determination* as the key elements of psychological personhood (Martin *et al*, 2010:42). They integrate Heidegger's ontology of being: "in our attempts to understand, we participate in the shaping of our own being and becoming" (*Ibid*:60); Vygotsky's developmental theory, Macmurray's philosophy of the personal, Mead's fallible perspectivism, and Charles Taylor's arguments about the moral nature of selfhood. The richness of the material employed could certainly transform the discipline of psychology and its use of agency, but the naturalistic approach to psychology is established and strong. If this philosophical proposal could be integrated with the work done within SDT and motivational psychology, where there is a natural middle ground, it would probably have a very good reception.

I would argue that the elements which have been outlined as agency in psychology fall mainly into two categories, namely *motivation* (encompassing also locus of control, unconscious motivation and choice), and *reflection and understanding* (also including integration, meaning and self-understanding). Aspects of these two areas have already been included in the agency proposal of the capability approach – Sen (1999:30-31) emphasised the need for public reasoning and collective reflection and motivation has also been proposed (Gasper, 2002; Alkire & Deneulin, 1998).

Having reviewed the use of agency in psychology, I shall consider agency in sociology and social theory.

4.1.4   The use of agency in sociology and social theory[63]

In social theory human agency deals with social action, in other words individual action as it relates to social purposes, and as it interfaces with social structures. Individuals can also act collectively on collective goals, as in social movements or any other collective, but the conceptual discussion on agency here deals only with individual action.[64] Agency is in fact seen by many theorists as the central theme of sociological theory (Archer, 2000, Giddens,

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[63] Social theory is broader than sociology, and includes sociology but also other theory of science scholarship that deals with social theoretical issues, for instance the work of certain philosophers, anthropologists, political scientists, and others.

[64] It would be possible to extend the ideas of Sen, Giddens and Habermas on how individual action can impact on social and political problems by means of social mobilisation, but this would fall beyond the scope of this dissertation.

1979, Ritzer, 2008, Weber, 1922).[65] It is therefore not strange that Joas (1996:4) argues that sociological theory offers the most appropriate vehicle for the study of agency. Together with the more intra-personal aspects of agency discussed above, these interpersonal aspects will enable us to see what some key elements of agency could be. It has to be emphasised that the intrapersonal and the interpersonal can be distinguished but not separated in an analysis, as human motivation and action is a complex process where these and many other factors are closely and continuously interconnected.

The purpose of this overview remains to explore some of the ways in which social theory can contribute to the theory of agency in the capability approach.

As in the case of the other social disciplines reviewed above, the origins of sociology are imbedded in the intellectual history of philosophy over the last centuries. It is also particularly connected to intellectual debates in the late 19th century, notably to developments in the discipline of economics. Joas (1996:34-37) writes that the development of the theory of marginal utility in economics arguably led to the exclusion of a theory of society based on a critical assessment of the political economy in that discipline,[66] and that sociology was created to take over the role of developing a theory of society. Joas supports the view that "[t]he intention was thus for sociology to be responsible for analysing those dimensions of social life which could not be grasped by economics; and for them to be analysed by means of a theory of action which precisely included non-rational forms of action" (Joas, 1996:35). This created a space for the development of sociology, and for the study of agency.

4.1.4.1 Talcott Parsons and 'The Structure of Social Action'

According to Joas and Knöbl (2009:39) Talcott Parson's study *The structure of social action* (first published in 1937) is probably the central thesis in modern sociology – "…one can understand much of the development of modern sociological theory only if one sees it as a sometimes veiled, sometimes quite open argument with the Parsonian theoretical model". In this substantial study Parsons sets out to understand the influences on action theory up to that point, and to suggest a theory of action. He therefore reviews Hobbes and the problem of order, Locke and classical economics, and "other paths to radical positivism" (Parsons, 1968 [1937]). Parsons then continues to devise a 'convergence thesis' in which he sets out to show that Weber, Durkheim, Alfred Marshall and Pareto independently, without collaboration of any kind, came to the same conclusion that utilitarianism was flawed. He maintains that

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[65] There are also dissenting voices about the centrality of agency. Immanuel Wallerstein (2004:317) argues that agency cannot really be analysed as a phenomenon in itself, independently of structures. "I have always had the feeling that the arguments [on agency] are either those of the proponents of 'agency' fighting against what they see as the proponents of dehumanized 'structure' (Touraine) or those who want to make psychological tendencies central to sociological analysis (Lazarsfeld)…I believe that all of social science is 'historical' or 'action-theoretical' and of course all empirical description, whether self-described as historical or action-oriented is structured, constrained and limited in its autonomy."

[66] See discussion on p.80.

Marshall, Pareto and Durkheim rejected the positivistic tradition[67] in favour of a voluntaristic theory of action, and that Weber likewise rejected the German Idealistic tradition, also in favour of a voluntaristic theory of action[68] (Parsons, 1968). All four of these scholars used economics as a frame of reference against which to pose problems, including Durkheim, the only one of the four who was not initially an economist but a philosopher. The context within which they worked was therefore exactly that described in the previous paragraph.

It is not necessary to discuss Parsons' analysis of Marshall and Pareto in detail.[69] In both cases Parsons showed how their theories favoured a voluntarist form of action (Joas and Knöbl, 2009:40). Durkheim rejected the notion of individual action until later in his life (Joas, 1996:41), but through his notion of the *collective consciousness*, which operated through social norms and values, he moved closer to the idea of a voluntaristic theory of action (Joas and Knöbl, 2009:42). Weber's theorisation of action is the most advanced of the four theorists, and he defines it as follows: "We shall speak of 'action' insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his behaviour – be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence. Action is social insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course" (quoted in Joas, 1996:38). Weber then develops a four-fold typology for social action, which became very influential. According to him, social action may be oriented in four possible ways. It may be
1. instrumentally rational (*zweckrational*) – determined by the expectation of others or by environmental conditions;
2. value-rational (*wertrational*) – determined by the belief in the value for its own sake;
3. affectual – determined by the emotions of the actor;
4. traditional – determined by habituation (Weber, quoted in Joas, 1996:39).

Having shown that agency was similarly conceived by four very different theorists as voluntarist, Parsons (1968:731-748) proceeds to describe his own 'action frame of reference'. It has two different levels, the descriptive and the analytical. *Unit acts* constitute the smallest parts of the action frame, and any concrete action can be such a unit act. The action frame consists of:
1. the actor
2. the end, goal or purpose of the action
3. the action situation
   3.1 conditions of the action, beyond the control of the actor
   3.2 means of the action, at the disposal of the actor
4. the norms and values of action (Joas and Knöbl, 2009:38).

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[67] Two radical forms of positivism explained order by means of either completely rational action, or the influence of environmental factors such as context and genetic endowment, with the result that actors do not seem capable of selecting their own ends (Joas and Knöbl, 2009:35-36).

[68] Joas and Knöbl (2009:46-47) maintain that Parsons was not completely correct in labelling these traditions as positivist and idealist.

[69] For a full account of how the theories of Marshall and Pareto fit into Parsons' scheme, see Joas and Knöbl, 2009:39-41.

The first three elements of the action frame derive from the utilitarian action frame, but the fourth, norms and values, is Parsons' own contribution. This is related to his view that it is compliance with central norms in society which creates social order. Central to this frame is the notion of ends and means, and it is worth noting that Parsons starts the second volume of the Structure of Social Action with a quotation from Weber: *Jede denkende Besinnung auf die letzten Elemente sinnvollen menschlichen Handels ist zunächst gebunden an die Kategorien 'Zweck" und "Mittel"* (Parsons, 1968 [1937]). (Every analytical consideration of the most meaningful elements of human action is primarily related to the categories "end" and "means".)

What can we conclude about Parsons' theory of agency at this point? Firstly, he intends "to isolate the fundamental basis of all human action in order to establish sociology philosophically" (King, 2009:271). Secondly, the action frame which he devises in the course of this project is an organic whole consisting of single unit acts, which are interrelated. "The very definition of an organic whole is as one within which the relations determine the properties of its parts. The properties of the whole are not simply a resultant of the latter" (Parsons, 1937, cited in King, 2009:270). Thirdly, the fact that the means of action will be decided by the actor indicates voluntarist action, albeit within the context of the conditions of the action, which are outside his or her control. Fourthly, this subjective perspective makes the means a normative phenomenon, with which Parsons signals the importance of norms in his schema (King, 2009:269-270). Fifthly, he emphasises rationality in this analysis, but also leaves space for emotions, which is a huge leap from the economic agency of his day. In the sixth place he includes habituation, which he will analyse together with norms. In the seventh place the theory of action is not a positivistic one, as he associated positivism with utilitarianism, but he nevertheless wanted to create a theory which would inform empirical work. Lastly his theory is anti-individualistic, as he also held utilitarianism to be problematically individualistic (Joas and Knöbl, 2009:27-28). He took the position that collective norms are expressed by means of agency, and that agency reflects social norms.

Of the characteristics of Parsons' theory of agency summarised above, the two most important features are arguably the voluntaristic nature of agency, with which he wanted to contradict the formulaic nature of agency in economic theory, and the role of norms. It was with an analysis of the role of norms in society and in social action that he attempted to respond to the Hobbesian question of order. Parsons started with Hobbes for two reasons. He saw him as "almost a pure case of utilitarianism" and believed that "Hobbes saw the problem with a clarity which has never been surpassed, and his statement of it remains valid today" (Parsons quoted in King, 2009:273). The question Hobbes had asked in 1651 was of course how, if everybody followed their own egoistic inclinations, social order was possible. This was also the question Parsons put to himself, and whether for that reason or because it really is a central question, it was also the question which many of the key social theorists of the 20th century responded to. In the process of investigating this question, Parsons noticed what became known as the 'utilitarian dilemma'. He pointed out that if one answered the Hobbesian question from the point of view of rational, autonomous actors, two theoretical problems resulted. Firstly, if all actors made their own rational but random choices, as

utilitarians maintain they would, there could be no social order, as their choices would remain random and no regular social interaction would take place through which order could come about. Secondly, if order would be imposed, as through a 'Leviathan', they would no longer have freedom of choice or of action. This dilemma exposes an inherent inconsistency in utilitarian thinking, and also in ontological individualism. If all human beings were truly free to decide what they wanted to do under all circumstances, social order and social co-existence would be impossible (King, 2009:273-274).

Parsons then proceeds to argue that underlying *norms* influence all action, and that adherence to these norms create the order that we see. Leaning on an insight of Durkheim, he argues that the order which is observed in the market is not the result of a universal personality trait such as egoism or hedonism, "but of certain features of the structure of social systems of action which, however, are not entirely constant but subject to institutional variation" (quoted in Joas and Knöbl, 2009:37). He thus poses a hypothesis that the order which we observe in society is the result of beliefs which we all subscribe to, because we are constantly subject to *honour or shame.* If we uphold the values of society, we receive honour, and if not, we are shamed (King, 2009:281). Although Joas and Knöbl (2009:53) maintain that Parsons fails to explain *how* norms and values shape social behaviour, King (2009:281-283) regards the insight of 'honour and shame' as proof that he did in fact indicate how it happens that people subject themselves to social rules. Although we need to have some understanding of social norms in order to follow them, we do not follow them by an individual decision, but by social obligation. King shows how Parsons used Durkheim's reading of Kant's *categorical imperative* to formulate his view on the adherence to norms. According to this formulation, human beings adhere to norms because these laws are obligatory, even if they are against self-interest. Secondly, they must be held to be desirable, so that people do not accept them unwillingly. In these ways human beings are socialised to replicate the norms and values of their own society.

In spite of having made this breakthrough in the development of a theory of social action, Parsons falls short a number of ways. Firstly, he does not sufficiently recognise the active understanding of agents, and stands accused of seeing them as "cultural dopes" – an 'objectivist' position. Another important problem in his theory is the fact that he does not show collective influences in the formation of norms and values, and ignores conflict and power. He also fails to address the consequences of action, and lastly, his functionalism seems unable to explain social change (Joas and Knöbl, 2009:53; King, 2009:435-436). His theory furthermore seems to be unable to adjust to changed social conditions. The understanding of norms, honour and shame has changed quite drastically since Parsons formulated his assumptions, and one has to ask to what extent people still behave according to 'accepted' norms because of honour and shame, if they had indeed done so before.[70]

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[70] "Normative" therefore seems a different term to Parsons from what it is to Sen in the age of theories of social justice.

Parsons was largely neglected during his lifetime. His work on social order after *The Structure of Social Action* consisted of attempting to show how all social phenomena maintain and transmit norms and values, and this work culminated in the publication of *The Social System* in 1951. Functionalism is however guilty of the "conflation of cause and effect" – not accepting that "identifying the functions of a phenomenon is not generally sufficient to *explain* it" (Joas and Knöbl, 2009:57). Only after his death was *The Structure of Social Action* resurrected and reinterpreted, and to a large extent re-valued (Joas, 1996; Giddens, 1984:xxxvi; King, 2011, King, 2009).

4.1.4.2 Explorations on agency and structure

Parsons' work was taken forward by a number of central social theorists who proceeded to investigate the nature of agency and society. The most important of these were arguably Giddens, Habermas, and Bourdieu (Lizardo, 2010; King, 2009:262).[71] They have particularly explored the relationship between agency and 'structure', which they have used as an image of the mental constructs which people create to ensure order in society, and which critiqued and extended Parsons' theory of how norms and values operate in society. The aim of this section is to establish how the intellectual question on the nature of social agency was taken forward by these three theorists, how agency is seen now, and what other avenues remain to be explored in order to be able to answer the question how social agency could contribute to agency analysis in the capability approach.

4.1.4.2.1   **Anthony Giddens**

Giddens attempted to resolve the problems associated with agency and structure. In the process he reviewed and integrated insights from a large range of theories, and thus exposed the English-speaking academic world to important debates in European social theory and philosophy (King, 2009: 260). His broad analysis of theoretical issues in social theory is impressive and he formulated an important new integration of social theoretical positions, possibly only equaled by that of Habermas.

Giddens' main original contribution is that of structuration, which explains and explores the ways in which *agency and structure* operate. He sees these two dynamics radically differently from any of his predecessors, in that he does not see them as two separate dynamics which influence each other, as if they are two parts of a system. Rather, agency is central to his theory, and structures are in fact formed by acting agents, and not separable from agency. His startling new insight is to see structure as *a virtual reality only*, as 'memory traces' in the mind of the acting person, and not as somehow permanent or concrete. He was influenced in this view of structure by the work of Levi-Strauss, who used structure to refer to "abstract models in the form of binary oppositions and dual relations, existing in and through human beings and that do not exist in time and space but as relations of presence and absence" (cited in Loyal, 2007:103). Giddens (1984:25) puts it as follows: "Structure, as recursively

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[71] Lizardo also deals with Levi-Strauss, who will not be discussed here, and Sewell, a historian. King also mentions Bhaskar, but he will also be left out of this discussion.

organised sets of rules and resources, is out of time and space, save in its instantiation and co-ordination as memory traces, and is marked by an 'absence of the subject'". He takes trouble to introduce structure by emphasising how he uses structure differently from what went before: "But there can be no doubt about how 'structure' is usually understood…as some kind of 'patterning' of social relations or social phenomena. This is often naively conceived of in terms of visual imagery, akin to the skeleton or morphology of an organism or to the girders of a building. Such conceptions are closely connected to the dualism of subject and social object: 'structure' here appears as external to human action, as a source of constraint on the free initiative of the independently constituted subject" (Giddens, 1984:16).

He therefore prefers to talk about 'structural properties' rather than about structures – and sees these as "structured features of social systems, especially institutionalised features, stretching across time and space" (Giddens, 1984:377). Structures are seen to comprise of rules and resources. "Rules may be explicit or tacit, intensive or shallow, formal or informal, strongly or weakly sanctioned, but should generally be understood, in Wittgenstein's sense, as practical forms of knowledge that 'allow us to go on' in novel circumstances" (cited in Loyal, 2007:104). Agents can thus follow rules or norms which exist as 'memory traces' to replicate structures, or they can change these rules and norms and create new structures. 'Chronically reproduced rules' are *institutions* – instances where rituals, customs and norms have been reshaped by agents into more fixed social patterns, but patterns which can be changed again (Giddens, 1984:375). The *duality of structure* is then "[s]tructure as the medium and outcome of the conduct it recursively organises; the structural properties of social systems do not exist outside of social action but are chronically implicated in its production and reproduction" (Giddens, 1984:374). If agency and 'reflexively monitored social conduct' is momentarily suspended, one can distinguish three structural dimensions of social systems: signification (the theory of coding by means of modes of discourse), domination (the theory of resource authorisation by political institutions and resource allocation by economic institutions), and legitimation (the theory of normative regulation by legal institutions). These structural properties allow the study of institutions, but always with the understanding that agency is present (Giddens, 1984:30-31).

Giddens then sees agency as the core concept in the process of social action or of social transformation. This is in contrast to Sen and other authors in the capability approach, who see agency only as actions based on reflective judgment on valued activities, and on a concept of the good (Sen, 1985:203; Alkire and Deneulin, 1998; Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007), Giddens distinguishes different levels of motivation which can lead to action. Motivation can lie anywhere between three levels of consciousness:

Diagram 3. Giddens: levels of consciousness (Giddens, 1984:5-7; 1979:55-57).

Discursive consciousness

Practical consciousness

Unconscious motives/cognition
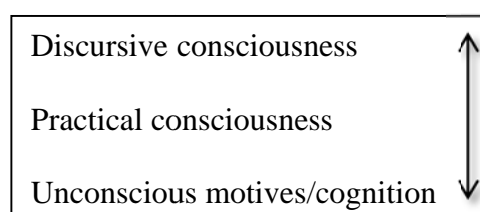
For Giddens, the vast majority of our actions are based on our 'practical consciousness,' where we, the knowledgeable agents, draw on the 'stocks of knowledge'[72] or 'mutual knowledge' which we have in common with others. This reservoir of common knowledge offers us routine ways of conducting the activities of every day. This is tacit knowledge which we apply skillfully, but which the actor is not able to formulate discursively. "Most such knowledge is practical in character: it is inherent in the capability to 'go on' within the routines of social life" (Giddens, 1984:4). Between practical and discursive knowledge is a permeable line, which fluctuates. Discursive consciousness is the action of stepping back for a moment and rationally considering and reflecting on an aspect of our ongoing action. "Human action occurs as a *durée*, a continuous flow of conduct, as does cognition. Purposive action is not composed of an aggregate or series of separate intentions, reasons and motives. Thus it is useful to speak of reflexivity as grounded in the continuous monitoring of action which human beings display and expect others to display" (Giddens, 1984:3). Unconscious cognition refers to repressed or distorted knowledge to which we have no direct conscious access, but which plays a role in our actions, by means of projection or other psychological mechanisms. Unconscious material is usually suppressed in early childhood or during painful experiences, and this suppressed material inhibits discursive consciousness (Giddens, 1984:49).

Only actions based on discursive consciousness here overlap partly with agency as used in the capability approach. Those are actions which the agent can explain discursively, and they form the top category in the next diagram.

Diagram 4. Giddens: stratification model of the agent (1979:56; 1984:5).

Unacknowledged conditions of action	Reflexive monitoring of action ⟶	Unintended consequences of action
	Rationalization of action (expression of intentionality)	
	Motivation of action (see the three levels of consciousness above)	
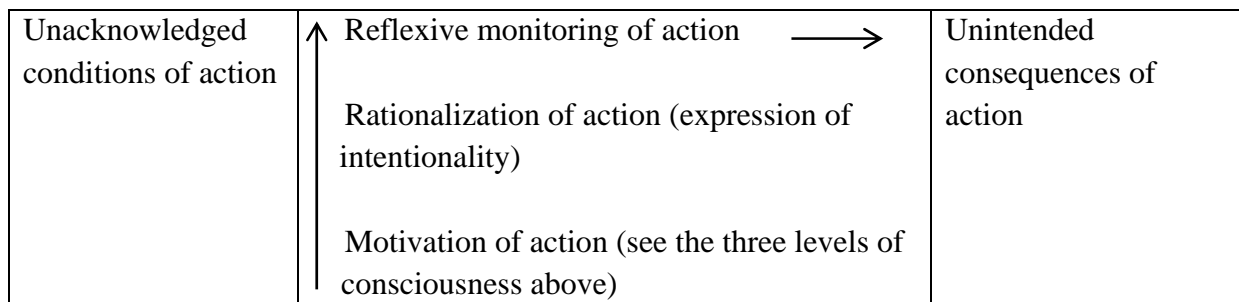
Reflexive monitoring of action therefore happens when somebody does something intentionally or purposefully – they would then reflect on why they act in a certain manner. However, this does not mean that these are exceptional occasions. "Such intentionality is a routine feature of human conduct, and does not imply that actors have definitive goals consciously held in mind during the course of their activities" (Giddens, 1979:56). Such a deliberate consideration of intentions, purposes and reasons, which some analytical philosophers see as action, does not reflect the actual pattern of our lives. The day to day activities of human subjects, argues Giddens, is rather characterised by "a continuous flow of

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[72] This term is borrowed from Schutz (Giddens, 1984:4).

conduct" into which there enters the "reflexive moment of attention, called into being in discourse, that breaks into the flow of action which constitutes the day-to-day activity of human subjects" (Giddens, 1979:55). The action which follows could always theoretically have been a different one - it is not inevitable.

Words such as motivation, purpose, reason, or motive have to be treated with caution, since they could be associated with hermeneutic voluntarism, "and because they extricate human action from the contextuality of time-space" (Giddens, 1984:3). Action is thus not completely free – it is framed by unacknowledged conditions of action. This is of course related to Parsons' action situation, although the Parsonian actor experiences conditions as beyond his control, while Giddens sees the conditions as not so much beyond his control as beyond his awareness or discursive consciousness. [73] Giddens also introduces the unintended consequences of action, which he maintained was absent in Parsons.

A few of the most important points in Giddens' critique of Parsons will be briefly reviewed, as these relate primarily to agency and structure. Giddens (1984:229) criticises Parsons' theory as evolutionary, and in fact as inspired by natural and biological sciences. Parsons was influenced in this regard by Comte, who saw social change as 'order with continuity'. Connected to this, Giddens also differs from Parsons on how social order is achieved and maintained. Rather than to see *compliance*, he takes a different approach: "But to rephrase the 'problem of order' as continuity through discontinuity prises open more basic issues in social theory; and, I shall argue, offers a different view of the relation between motivation and norms to that developed by Parsons" (Giddens, 1979:217). With this formulation, he succeeds in steering social theory away from the time-bound limitations of Parsons' theory towards what he terms 'structural principles', which deal with a more general level of analysis, and with "factors involved in the overall institutional alignment of society" (Giddens, 1984:376). He also attempts a less deterministic but still nuanced view of agency, and accuses Parsons' actors of being lacking in "purposive conduct with the rationalisation of action" (Giddens, 1979:112).

Giddens thus replaces Parsons' 'unit act' by changing the focus from a means-end schema to one where the central focus is on active agents. *All human beings are in fact knowledgeable agents, and all acts are social action.* 'Reflexive monitoring of action' is something which all human beings continuously do – they consider social and physical aspects of their specific situation, and continuously contextualise it in time and space. Actors "- also routinely and for the most part without fuss - maintain a continuing 'theoretical understanding' of the grounds of their activity" (Giddens, 1984:5). This does not mean that reasons always have to be given or dealt with discursively. Most reasonably competent actors will however be able to explain most of what they do, if they would be asked. Motivation, in contrast, is usually not discussed

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[73] Giddens refers us here to Marx in the introduction to the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, where he says: *People make their own history, but not freely, not under the conditions of their own choice, "sondern unter unmittelbar vorgefunden, gegebenen und überlieferten Umständen"* (*but under pre-existing conditions*). (Giddens, 1984:xxi).

and motives are usually also not entirely conscious, unless it is an unusual situation which represents a break with routine.

Giddens (1984:14-16) also argues that power operates on the exact principles discussed above. It is not lodged in mechanistic systems, institutions or processes, but in people. The acting person can always fall back on his or her own power to steer a situation in a different direction, albeit under conditions which might be unpredictable and with consequences which cannot be foreseen. Another aspect of Giddens' theory which has been used widely is the notion of 'positioning' – the agent can position herself in relation to other people, time and space, or traditions and identity, to give a few examples. This rich term is taken from Goffman, and lends itself to a wide range of applications (Giddens, 1984:xxiv; 85; Archer, 2007:100). Giddens has also used the interpretative tradition of Goffman more generally, incorporating the idea that all people are knowledgeable agents in terms of their own lives, and that they can interpret their own encounters from a perspective which external researchers cannot access. Social integration can thus best be seen as the study of interaction in circumstances of co-presence, where 'systemness' "is achieved largely through the routine reflexive monitoring of conduct anchored in practical consciousness" (Giddens, 1984:36).

In spite of Giddens repudiating it, the duality of structure[74] is seen by some to be a deterministic theory (Schatzki, 1997; King, 2009:263-264). Schatzki emphasises the tacit rules used by Giddensian agents to reproduce structures, and sees the re-enactment of those rules as not being free. I would argue in Giddens' defense on this point that he admits of constraining conditions, but that in the exercising of his agency, the Giddensian agent can discursively and reflexively consider his options and come to a free decision, to the extent that any decision or choice can be free. Giddens could maybe have considered adding constraints which the agent is aware of, as well as those that he is not aware of, as those can be equally restrictive. Furthermore, not all restrictive conditions are subject to agency intervention, and some might simply have to be accepted.

There are a number of useful concepts which Giddens could contribute to an enrichment of the theory of agency in the capability approach. His view of structures as ideas which people can continuously transform is a powerful conceptual tool. The notion, furthermore, that agency is not merely those relatively rare actions where we deliberatively weigh a situation and decide on what we value, but rather what we do in the course of the flow of our daily lives, is also worth contemplating. The three levels of consciousness which forms Giddens' theory of motivation is a rich integration of insights from interpretative social theory and psychology, and allows him to analyse agency hermeneutically in terms of levels of motivation, levels of action, and the impact of time and space on the conditions and consequences of such action. These ideas will be integrated into a framework for analysis in the conclusion to this chapter.

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[74] Giddens (1984:374) defines the duality of structure as "Structure as the medium and outcome of the conduct it recursively organises: the structural properties of social systems do not exist outside of action but are chronically implicated in its production and reproduction. "

4.1.4.2.2 Pierre Bourdieu

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu wrote most of his theoretical work in relation to the fieldwork he had done among the Kabyle people in Algeria. He wrote his central work, *Outline of a theory of practice,* where he introduced the term *habitus,* in 1977. His published *Practical reason: On the theory of social action* in 1998. He sees the field of sociology and social enquiry as the task "to uncover the most profoundly buried structures of the various social worlds which constitute the social universe, as well as the 'mechanisms' which tend to ensure their reproduction or their transformation" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:7). His interest is particularly in the structures which determine class mobility and immobility in the modern world. In the course of investigating these structures, Bourdieu distinguishes different key concepts. A *field* is a broad historical category which can be seen as a structural space in which power and conflict are enacted (Bordieu, 1977; Schwartz, 2007). In the study being described here, the field could possibly be seen as the phenomenon of urban migration of the Xhosa speaking people, in this case from the rural Eastern Cape to Cape Town, in order to improve their socio-economic situation, within the context of a struggle over land, liberty, resources and domination. All the women interviewed were born in the Eastern Cape and all of them deliberately came to the urban area in search of a "better life." *Habitus* is a term used by Bourdieu to denote the social framework or system which functions as an interpretative space for an individual, partly consciously and partly unknown to him or her; it is partly cognitive but also often non-rational. The *habitus* therefore acts as a set of internalised social constructs or socialisations; as collective data about social histories which are used by individual agents for the interpretation of life experiences, and for the formulation of their own action (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu, 1990a; Bourdieu 1990b; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Action is often not rationally calculated, but occurs as a kind of "structured improvisation", and takes place in the space between the *field* and *habitus* (Schwartz, 2007). Bourdieu (1990a:54) captures it in the following way: "The habitus, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms". An obvious problem with the *habitus* concept described here is the impression of determinism it creates – as if it would be an inevitable process. Schatzki (1997) and King (2009:264) also see this aspect of Bourdieu's work as deterministic.

Of special interest is Bourdieu's discussion on what happens to *habitus* when new aspirations appear. The 'rules' conveyed by transmitted knowledge and wisdom will be reviewed by the person. However, personal interest is normally stronger than rules and an estimation of the chances of success will be done. This is not a rational weighing of advantages and disadvantages, but a bringing into play of the whole conventional wisdom that relates to the possibility of the aspiration being realized, also of unconscious motivations and reasons why success or failure might result. In this process the outcomes which are assessed as improbable

are excluded, and only the other aspirations are allowed (Bourdieu, 1990a:76, 77). It conveys the workings of agency, albeit still in a deterministic way.

Bourdieu also developed the terms *social, cultural* and *symbolic capital*. He uses these to indicate the ways in which complex and supportive social and cultural systems can be a part of a social asset base, but also points out how these supportive systems can constrain class mobility when people identify with certain forms of cultural or symbolic capital.[75] Bourdieu's term *symbolic capital* is arguably one of his most interesting concepts. He uses this to indicate the symbolic forms which reinforce and perpetuate social and economic power and domination over long periods of time, thus maintaining socio-economic inequality and class differentiation (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu 1990a; Schwartz, 2007).

A last concept of Bourdieu's which is taken note of is that of *socio-analysis*. As psychologists deal with inner problems by making psychological facts known and conscious in psycho-analysis, Bourdieu advocates the practice of *socio-analysis*, which implies that the researcher and reflexive sociologist will make social material conscious, with a view to changing underlying and harmful social structures over time (Schwartz, 2007). That, of course, partly supports his claim that his work is not fundamentally deterministic.

Because of the lack of flexibility and the resulting danger of determinism in Bourdieu's theory I would not suggest that his ideas be used to supplement agency in the capability approach. I do however think that *social, cultural* and *symbolic capital* as well as the notion of *habitus* could be useful concepts in the analysis of the fieldwork in chapter eight.

4.1.4.2 3 Jürgen Habermas

Habermas is a contemporary of Giddens and Bourdieu, an erstwhile member of the Frankfurt School, and one of the foremost sociologists/philosophers in Europe. He is furthermore still an active philosopher. He does not distinguish between sociology and philosophy in his work and contributes to both disciplines. He works within the Neo-Marxist tradition, has done a broad integration of theoretical ideas and is one of the most influential philosophers in the world. His work has been encyclopedic, but there are two broad strains – one deals with a macro-theory on the political integration of modern society based on market forces, and the second is a micro-theory which deals with issues of rationality, communication and knowledge (Bohman and Rehg, 2011). In this overview I shall concentrate on the second strain, and particularly on those aspects of his theory which contribute to a theory of social action. Interestingly, Joas, an ex-student of Habermas, tells us that Habermas admits that "The Theory of Communicative Action" is directly structured along the lines of Parsons' "The Structure of Social Action" (Joas, 1996:7).

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[75] Ben Fine (2006) argues that Bourdieu's work on these forms of capital has been appropriated by the World Bank to serve political purposes, much in the way Bourdieu attempted to expose.

Joas and Knöbl (2009:228-231) maintain that Habermas started his investigation by developing a conception of rationality in response to what he saw as the flawed rationality of mainly the utilitarians. His response was however also aimed at the lack of rationality of non-utilitarian post-modern theorists such as Feyerabend. To find a way out of this double dead end, he formulated his *theory of communicative reason*. This theory is based on the notion of language, and further on the intuitive idea that we are rational in everyday speech (Giddens, 1985:123-139).

Using the writings of Charles Peirce, Habermas also identified a set of '*a priori* interests' or fundamental orientations in the process of social reproduction which correspond to types of knowledge. He distinguished three such interests: control (and prediction), understanding, and emancipation. These correspond to empirical and analytical knowledge (objective knowledge); hermeneutics which attempts to increase understanding (practical insight), and a normative critical theory which promotes emancipation. Such emancipation occurs when human beings reflect on and gain awareness of problematic social restrictions, and confront these, using a combination of empirical knowledge and understanding (Habermas, 1991). In his early work Habermas interpreted history by means of historical materialism in order to develop knowledge about emancipation, in the same way in which psychoanalysis would use an individual's personal history to assist him in understanding how his life could change (Honneth and Joas, 1980:154; Giddens, 1985:125-126), but he later dropped this analogy when it was extensively criticised as the basis for a critical theory of society. Only in "the theory of communicative action" did he manage to resolve the theoretical issues surrounding emancipation (Bohman and Regh, 2011).

In constructing his theory of action, Habermas borrows from Marx. He uses the forces of production and the relations of production to inform instrumental and communicative agency in a modern theory of social action (Honneth and Joas, 1980:154). He also assigns types of rationality to types of action.[76] He distinguishes *teleological* or purposeful action, which is intended to manipulate the external world, *normatively regulated* action, based on social relations and their appropriateness, and *dramaturgical* action, which deals with self-representation. The typology he ultimately uses is however based on his original focus, namely on the comprehensive rationality of action. With this in mind he subdivides action into 'purposive-rational action' and 'strategic action' on the one side, and communicative action on the other. Purposive-rational action or instrumental action refers to action which deals with material objects; the acting person is not in a social interaction, and acts in order to achieve success. Strategic action does not relate to material objects, but to other subjects in the means-ends schema, such as action situations in game theory. Strategic action therefore involves social interaction, but the action is *goal directed* rather than aimed at understanding. Communicative action is different from all other forms of action in that it is predicated on *understanding*. Only in communicative action do the actors question all prerequisites and other characteristics of action situations, until they reach some form of consensus and

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[76] For the problems associated with this procedure, see Joas and Knöbl, 2009:232-233.

understanding. This form of action is based on "cooperative achievement of understanding among participants" (Roderick, 1986:109). It does not attempt to achieve a specific goal, or specific ends, and is more open-ended (Joas and Knöbl, 2009:228-235). Habermas illustrates this as follows:

Diagram 5. Habermas: Types of action (1984:285).

Action orientation/action situation	Oriented to success	Oriented to reaching understanding
Nonsocial	Instrumental action	-
Social	Strategic action	Communicative action

Habermas then proceeds to link the act of communication to the human speech act. Both these acts are aimed at conveying meaning, and also at giving reasons which explain their validity (Bohman and Rehg, 2011).

Communicative action thus takes the ideas of Parsons and Goffman into account and synthesises these into a new framework for social action (Joas and Knöbl, 2009:236). Habermas (1991:133-141) also uses the work of Lawrence Kohlberg on moral consciousness to suggest ways in which understanding and consensus can be used as the basis for new ways of agency engagement. He integrates both *Erklärung* and *Verstehen*; both positivism and the hermeneutic tradition of mainly Gadamer (Bohman and Regh, 2011). Giddens (1985:126) says is this regard: "[o]ne of Habermas's most interesting contributions to philosophy is his attempt to reconcile hermeneutics and positivism and thereby overcome the division between them."

Another important contribution, related to agency, is his work on what it is to be human, and on "the future of human nature" (Habermas, 2003). He builds on the work of Kant, who is now out of date because his transcendental theory proposed too big a role for philosophy – that of the gatekeeper of knowledge and culture. Hegel made the same mistake when he attempted to formulate a theory of modernity which had as its task "to effect an encyclopedic conceptual synthesis of the diffuse chunks of content thrown up by the natural sciences" (Habermas, 1991:5). Rawls, in Habermas' view, eventually addresses the question satisfactorily:

> "Rawls's political liberalism marks the endpoint of this development, precisely as a response to the pluralism of worldviews and to the spreading individualisation of lifestyles. Surveying the rubble of philosophical attempts to designate particular ways of life as exemplary or universally obligatory, Rawls draws the proper conclusion: that the "just society" ought to leave it to individuals to choose how it is that they want to "spend the time they have for living." It guarantees to each an equal freedom to develop an ethical self-understanding, so as to realise a personal conception of the "good life" according to one's own abilities and choices" (Habermas, 2003:2).

Into the life-world of these knowledgeable and competent yet fallible agents enter complex and difficult decisions on genetic engineering and modification of human beings and other animals, on new forms of democracy and legitimation, and on why we should have values in a post-modern world. In this world, holds Habermas, social science and philosophy should be normative and play a role in the hermeneutic interpretation of our world and its complexities (Habermas, 1991, 2003).

When we consider the ways in which the work of Habermas could contribute to the theory of agency in the capability approach, one is struck by a number of ways in which the two theories could interconnect. Like Sen, Habermas values the insights of Rawls as central to current philosophy. This refers to the fact that the individual is the originator of decisions about her own life, rather than that group norms or institutions should determine how people should live. It also refers to the fact that the individual is responsible for normative and ethical reflection and action in both sets of theories. Both then also emphasise the importance of individual decision making and choice in the modern world. Furthermore the agency description of both theories includes the reflective judgment of the agent, and a concept of the good. Both theorists also recognize and affirm the insights of Marx in their work, with Habermas basing the different aspects of agency respectively on the forces and relations of production. As Habermas partly built his theoretical integration on the concept of social action, his theory on agency is arguably much more developed than that of Sen. It is however a complex theory which could add unnecessary confusion to the capability approach if integrated as a whole.[77] I would therefore recommend that the distinction between action aimed at *success* and action aimed at *understanding* be used, with emphasis on both individual as well as collective understanding, as used in *communicative action*. For the sake of simplicity, and because I am not convinced that much would be gained, I would not use the distinction between social and non-social agency. Some theorists would in any case maintain that all actions are likely to be influenced by others (Appadurai, 2004).

Giddens, Bourdieu and Habermas have therefore made a substantial contribution to our understanding of agency in social theory. These contributions also laid the foundation for questions on the structure-agency duality. King (2011a:261) maintains that "[i]n the past twenty years, the theme of structure and agency has been a fundamental issue in contemporary social theory; there has been extensive ontological debate about whether social reality should be seen in dualistic terms." This debate will be briefly reviewed.

4.1.4.3 Agency and structure: some current critiques and perspectives

Archer (1982), Schatzki (1997), King (2009) and others have criticised the "duality of structure" which they see implied in the theories of Giddens and Bourdieu. At the same time 'structure' is a concept which is necessary for social analysis and the debates on how to conceptualise it therefore continue (Lizardo, 2010:651). Levi-Strauss initiated the idea of

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[77] In this regard McNeill's warning about the dangers of complexity in the popularisation of a concept is taken into account (McNeill, 2007).

structure, but as a practical tool to analyse fieldwork, so that it was "an idle terminological stand-in for the older organicist notion of 'organisation' in the Durkheim-Schaffle-Spencer line" until it was used by the structuralists for quite a different purpose (Lizardo, 2010:652).[78]

The notion of structure nevertheless opened up the possibility of an analysis not limited to the inherent properties of a phenomenon, but to its position in relation to other systems. Mary Douglas expressed this when she wrote that "[s]tructural analysis does not work by reducing all symbols to one or two of their number; rather, it requires an abstract statement of the patterned relations of all the symbols to one another" (quoted in Lizardo, 2010:652).

Giddens' work on structure, reviewed above, made structure a central part of the knowledge base of every sociologist, and often also of fieldworkers in other social science disciplines. In her overview of the development of 'practice theory' used within the discipline of anthropology, Sherry Ortner (2006:16) writes that the development of a theory of agency and structure by Giddens and Bourdieu was a seminal breakthrough for fieldworkers such as herself. "[T]he production of the world through human practice…seemed new and very powerful, providing a dialectical synthesis of the opposition between "structure" (or the social world as constituted) and "agency" (or the interested practices of real people) that had not previously been achieved." Giddens particularly used structure in an ontological sense, as a virtual concept. Lizardo (2010) on the other hand believes that this led to confusion and incoherence, and to much of the criticism which Giddens' work provoked. Sewell (2005) addresses this problem by returning to the structuralism of Levi-Strauss, and by reviving his concept of methodological structuralism. He uses this in combination with Giddensian structure, which exists only as structural properties. Lizardo (2010) considers Sewell's weak structuralism as a way to use structural analysis in the future.

Margaret Archer (1988, 2000, 2003) has criticised Giddens for conflating structure and agency, and their mutual influence on each other in the process of structuration, so that the disaggregated exploration of agency and structure is not possible. She therefore proposes that structure and agency, both of which she recognises, should be approached as a dualism – a process which she calls the Morphogenetic Approach. In her analytical work, she introduced the concept of "internalisation", to suggest a reflective process in which the agent does not so much engage in rational, discursive practices, but in an integrating internal conversation.[79] She claims that this internal conversation mediates the divide between structure and agency (Archer, 2003:130). Such conversations can integrate body and identity positionings, as well as other intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics (Archer, 2007; 2003). Archer uses the work of Peirce and Mead to facilitate the process of self-observation and self-reflection, doing important work on this much neglected aspect of sociological reflection. Her work is attractive from the perspective of analysing intensive qualitative fieldwork, as it provides a

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[78] There is also a tension between the sociologists who use Levi-Strauss' more abstract and conceptual notion of structure, and the more concrete, empiricist use which Radcliffe-Brown made of it.

[79] This formulation is not too different from that of Giddens (1979:55).

recent and competently formulated model for this kind of work. This could also add to the hermeneutical understanding of action. I however do not agree with her suggestion to use agency and structure as a dualism, and prefer Giddens' notion of the close relationship between agency and structure from an analytical perspective.

Finally, Normal Long (2001) has written on the need for an 'actor perspective' in development sociology. His work does not necessarily make a new contribution, but he emphasises the importance of an actor rather than a 'structure' perspective, also by using a social constructionist approach. The value of his work lies in the ways in which he brings the actor perspective alive with numerous case examples and illustrations from the field of development sociology, and also in the broad and comprehensive overview of theoretical perspectives which he uses and which can be employed in the analysis of development projects of different kinds. His theoretical work is thoroughly and richly informed by the realities of development. Although he uses Giddens and Habermas in his work, he fails to utilise their insights, which, in my view, could have addressed some of his concerns.

4.1.4.3.1 Actor-Network Theory

Actor-Network Theory (ANT) has been developed by Bruno Latour, and others such as Michel Cannon and John Law. They have attempted to redirect sociology away from its false beginnings as a 'science' where it appropriated the social as if it is a category that can exist in isolation. The 'social' very often turned out to be what was left after the other disciplines had taken the physical, the material, or the psychological, and this, in their view, led to a completely artificial, shrunken field of work. Latour writes that ANT does not support a science of the social, but a *tracing of associations* - "a type of connection between things that are not themselves social" (Latour, 2005:5). Conventional sociology believes "the social" to consist of social ties, "whereas associations are made of ties which themselves are non-social" (Latour, 2005:8). This view of sociology had been proposed by Gabriel Tarde (1843-1904), a philosopher who opposed Durkheim's views, but the 'scientific' strand of sociology became hegemonic.

Agency is similarly re-conceived in this approach as something for which there is no universal social formula, but as a complex 'surprise', in which we have to ask questions rather than to provide outlines and schemes. The questions would be: "When we act, who else is acting? How many other agents are also present? How come I never do what I want? Why are we all held by forces that are not of our own making?" (Latour, 2005:43). Agency is therefore seen as not transparent, not clear, but as a "conglomerate of many sets of surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled" (Latour, 2005:44). Motivation is not social, and action is dislocated. In the process of studying somebody's agency, the "metaphysical innovations produced by ordinary actors" have to be given a prime position, as they will often go beyond the insights of the philosophers (Latour, 2005:51). In this respect Garfinkel and the ethnomethodologists have provided valuable insights. Furthermore, agency analysis would also include the review of non-human agency, as material and semiotic aspects of agency can be part of the knot which has to be untangled in order to understand

action. There are many useful ideas in ANT. The most important of these for the purpose of this study is the central idea of tracing associations across many fields of involvement.

4.1.4.3.2 Social agency as the understanding of creative actors

Hans Joas (1996), having thoroughly reviewed the development of the concept of social action, proposes that social agency be seen primarily as creative action. He proposes three metaphors to anchor this theory. These are expression, production and revolution.

Joas (1996:75-85) argues that the work of the romantic philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder paves the way for looking at *expression*, which was sidelined during the Enlightenment and its emphasis on rationality. Herder revived the ideas of Aristotle on *eudaimonic* development. He also believed that it is in what we say and do that we recognise our own potential. Herder furthermore argued that this is not only true for the gifted few, but for everybody. The idea is therefore that a first step in creative agency is the honest and congruent expression of the self in words and actions. *Production* as metaphor shows how our life work can be an expression of our own individual self as well as of our relationships. Joas bases this on the work of Marx, who wrote on this aspect extensively (Joas, 1996:85-99).[80] *Revolution* is the third metaphor, also based on Marx, which symbolizes new beginnings and constant transformation (Joas, 1996:105-116). All of these metaphors should be seen symbolically, and not concretely.

Joas bases his proposal for a theory of action mainly on the work of the American pragmatists, and proposes that creative actors should be seen in terms of *situation, corporeality, and sociality*. In this way he attempts to bring agency back to a pragmatic reality, and to move away from the problems of addressing traditional debates on traditional terms. Situations present themselves and are created by us – as intentional agents. Corporeality indicates our being-in-a-body, which is an all-important part of agency. Sociality emphasises our being in relationships of different kinds, which also influence all our actions. Colapietro (2009) sees this as a choice for the 'concrete' emphasis of the pragmatists, as opposed to the abstractions of those who opposed them.

Creativity is then the main characteristic of action, which occurs as *improvisation*. Rational thought is an element of agency, but not the defining element. In Joas' proposal, creativity captures the rational and normative elements of the economic and sociological models, and becomes an inclusive concept. It serves an important role in the development of 'creative democracy', leading to new forms such as discursive democracy (Joas, 1996:196). Creativity is also required for the formation of norms: "[c]reativity is needed not only in order to give norms and values a concrete form in practice; the existence of values depends also on there having been a creative process by which values were formed" (Joas, 1996:233).

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[80] For a summary of Habermas's critique of Marx' s arguments on labour as self-expression, see Joas (1996:103).

Colapietro (2009) sees Joas' proposal as significant, and a revision of the pragmatist vision of agency, even though he also critiques the theoretical foundations of the proposal. The notion of creativity as an aspect of agency, and of action as improvisation, can be taken forward to inform a hermeneutic analysis of agency in the capability approach.

4.2 **Two proposals from chapter four on the extension of social agency in the capability approach**

Since Parsons, different theorists have attempted to change the rational determinism of the agency descriptions which have come to us from traditional agency debates. Although the main agency theorists of the 20th and 21st centuries have been very divergent, the common thread in their work seems to be the desire to break with the heritage of *homo œconomicus*. Sen played a major role in this regard, as was shown in chapter three, and will be returned to in chapter five. There are however remaining lacunae in this regard.

There are two proposals that flow from this chapter, both of which will be explored later in the dissertation. I suggest that there are two main contributions which social theory on social action can make to the capability approach. The first is that some of the insights on agency in social science and psychology could be incorporated into the capability framework. Secondly, the proposal is to strengthen the hermeneutical element which already exists in the capability approach. These proposals will be formulated in chapter five, and followed up in the chapter on agency analysis, chapter nine.

The ideas which are proposed for consideration in such a capability-cum-social science analysis are presented in table three below. It is important to point out that this is not a how-to-do-it list which can be ticked off, but that it is a sensitizing outline which should inform the thinking of a researcher. The words of Mary Douglas and Sherry Ortner, quoted on p. 105, illuminate the process. Douglas reminds us that the task of the researcher is to discover the abstract statement(s) which best express the "patterned relations of all the symbols to one another" (quoted in Lizardo, 2010:652), which is to see structure as the underlying grid which influences social action of different kinds. Ortner (2006:16) says much the same, but approaches the discussion from the agency angle, when she sees the contribution of agency theorists such as Giddens and Bourdieu as showing "the production of the world through human practice". By relying on the reflexive monitoring and interpretation of their action by research participants, as suggested by Sen and Giddens, and also by Goffman, Garfinkel, Archer and Latour, and searching for the ways in which these reflections express "patterned relations", we can integrate agency and structure, the personal and the general. In this way we can contribute to the construction of knowledge and to understanding and insight.

Table 3: Agency ideas in related disciplines, considered for agency analysis in this study

Theorist	Theory	Main ideas to use in analysis
Ryan, Deci et. al.	SDT	Intrinsic (or externally integrated) motivation
		Universal innate psychological need for autonomy, relatedness, competence
Freud	Psycho-analysis	Unconscious motivation of behaviour (incorporated into the theories of Giddens, Bourdieu and Habermas)
Frankl	Logotherapy	Meaning
Giddens	Structuration	The reflexive monitoring of action; the interpretation of their own action by knowledgeable agents
		Structures as virtual realities, formed and transformed in action
		All actions as agency
		3 levels of consciousness or motivation: discursive, practical, unconscious
		The rationalisation of action (retrospective reasons)
		Unintended consequences of action
		Unacknowledged conditions of action
Goffman	Interpretative theory	Interpretation of their own action by knowledgeable agents (incorporated by Giddens)
Garfinkel	Ethnomethodology	Interpretation of their own action by knowledgeable agents (incorporated by Giddens)
Bourdieu	Habitus	Habitus and habituation (but as a changeable notion)
Habermas	Communicative action	Social action, aimed at understanding and consensus
	Strategic action	Social action aimed at achieving strategic goals
Archer	Internalisation	Tracing internal conversations
Latour	Actor network theory	Tracing associations, asking questions
Joas	Creativity	Expression, improvisation
Giddens, Habermas, Archer, Joas, Martin et al.	Reflexivity, self-understanding	Personal and collective reflections, guided and spontaneous

Having reviewed the use of agency in a number of related disciplines with the purpose of finding out which key ideas could possibly be taken forward in this study, I shall consider the relationship between aspirations and agency in the next chapter.

Chapter five

Aspirations and agency: theoretical framework and conceptual discussion

This chapter firstly contains a theoretical framework for the analysis of agency in this dissertation. The framework has four components, thee of which are brought forward from previous chapters and a list of dimensions which is discussed here. As the research was planned around the notion that the capacity to aspire would activate and unlock agency, I start with that proposal. I then motivate the two proposals which arose out of the exploration of agency in chapters three and four, namely that agency analysis be extended in the capability approach by means of the incorporation of certain social science constructs on agency, and by means of a hermeneutical analysis. The list of suggested dimensions for the analysis of agency is then discussed. These four components will form the theoretical framework which will be used in chapter nine.

The concept *aspirations* is subsequently defined and discussed. This is followed by a conceptual review of agency. The chapter is concluded with a review of some of the published research on aspirations which appeared since the publication of Appadurai's paper in 2004, which gives background information on how scholars have approached the idea of the capacity to aspire in a range of research programmes. This chapter is therefore not only a literature review, but also a formulation of theoretical ideas which I shall use in this study.

The theoretical framework for the analysis of agency in this study will now be presented, and will consist of the components discussed under 5.1 – 5.4.

4.1 A proposal that aspirations are agency-unlocking

In order to explain the relationship between aspirations and agency in human development interventions I propose that aspirations in such interventions are *agency-unlocking* and sustaining of commitment over long periods. (Conradie, 2013:27; Conradie and Robeyns, 2013). The proposal is furthermore that the act of thinking about their aspirations, expressing them and prioritising what they want to do as they attempt to realise these aspirations, has the effect of motivating people and unlocking and activating their own latent agency and initiative. Such deliberation and reflection is therefore essential for the purposeful achievement of aspirations. This would be especially so if the reflection on aspirations would lead to action. People in this kind of situation might reflect on political repression or incompetence and organise themselves for social action programmes where pressure is put onto government. People might also be involved in self-help groups which will also promote the development of their agency, or might indeed only persevere in pursuing their goals on their own (Appadurai, 2004; Conradie and Robeyns, 2013; Ibrahim, 2006). It is not claimed that agency is created, but that the activities associated with reflecting on and voicing aspirations will unlock and sustain latent agency, often for prolonged periods.

This proposal will be confirmed or rejected in the analytical part of the thesis, in chapters eight and nine. The empirical material will be reviewed and I shall assess whether this proposition holds in the type of human development intervention which the thesis describes. If it can be confirmed, the capacity to aspire could potentially be seen as a poverty alleviation

measure in the way which Appadurai foresaw, and particularly by means of the activation and engagement of agency. This would be in line with Appadurai's thinking: "The premise is that the capacity to aspire, as a cultural capacity, may well be a capacity…whose fortification may accelerate the building of other capacities by the poor themselves" (Appadurai, 2004:82).

4.2 A proposal to extend the capability approach through the selective incorporation of social science concepts of agency

In the discussion on agency in the capability approach in chapter three we saw that Sen critiqued the use of agency in economics. In order to link these conceptual developments to the proposal being made here, I shall summarise this process briefly. For the purpose of using agency in the capability approach he then extended the potential use of the term step by step. He started by differentiating between agency which is commitment to a cause, and agency which feels sympathy with a sufferer. This distinction continues to address the covert questions of self- or other interest, and for that reason I would not use it in a social and hermeneutical agency analysis, where that question has no bearing. Sen (1985:186) also identifies agency as autonomy or personal liberty, which I shall use as one of the dimensions of agency. By then linking autonomy to the choice of valuable capabilities, and the ability to turn valued goals into functionings, (Sen, 1985:203) he explains the essence of agency in the capability approach. Furthermore Sen also argues convincingly that this is closely related to reflective judgment, and to a concept of the good. To this he adds that agency also involves success in the pursuit of goals (Sen, 1984:276). Other capability theorists add to this that agency could include motivation (Gasper, 2002; Alkire & Deneulin, 1998), and also skills (Gasper, 2002) and/or abilities (Alkire, 2009).

Why do I find it necessary to amplify this description of agency? I would argue that Sen broke through the narrow description of agency in economics (at the time when he wrote) in order to present his view of agency as an additional conceptual tool to express what the liberal, thinking individual can do for himself or herself and for others in the world of functionings and capabilities. Because of this particular perspective, the wider possibilities that an agency analysis in the capability approach already offers are not always used to the full, with a comprehensive inclusion of aspects such as motivation and skills. More importantly however, social theorists have refined the concept of agency and its potential use extensively in the last decades. There are very useful concepts in these theories which have been developed for the social theoretical analysis of agency. Firstly it involves all kinds of action, which might be useful for a broad analysis of agency such us this, and secondly it offers a number of well-articulated tools to add to the handful that the capability approach has provided us with.

As the capability approach is increasingly being applied in a multi-disciplinary way it is likely that there will be a need for a model which does not only ask what agency can do in reflectively choosing valued goals from a capability set, but also what other forms of agency can be used. This is the question to which I am responding here.

Apart from the developments in social theory, Alkire and Deneulin (1998) and Alkire (2009) also point out the potential usefulness of the new self-determination theory (SDT) in motivational psychology. I shall make extensive use of this material, which points to the value of a *eudaimonic* approach to agency. Aristotle philosophically formulated the notion of *eudaimonia* in his *Nichomachean Ethics*. The word *eu* in Greek means good, and *daimon* can be translated as 'spirit' or 'true self'. The connotation is therefore that by pursuing, expressing and realising our true nature to the fullest we achieve the good life. Aristotle also connected the term with the role in one's life of reason, well-justified virtues, and moral values (Chirkov *et al*, 2011:2-3; Ryan and Deci, 2001). Gough, McGregor and Camfield (2007: 7, 16, 32) confirm that a *eudaimonic* framework is increasingly being used for well-being assessment, and that the work of Sen and Haq in combination with SDT offers a coherent framework for wellbeing analysis and for agency analysis.

In summary, the problems regarding agency in the capability approach are the following:

- It provides for a rational form of agency only, leading from reflection on goals and preferences, to pursuit of those goals and preferences;[81]
- It is largely premised on individual reflection and choice, and although the capability approach makes some space for group influences, these are not emphasised in terms of agency;[82]
- The interface of agency and other concepts in the capability approach, such as functionings and capabilities, is not clearly theorised, although some work has been done in this regard (Alkire, 2009).

These problems can be addressed by incorporating material from social theory, as:

- Social theory took on the task of theorising non-rational action when economics became a separate discipline in the 19th century (Joas, 1996:35) and has made considerable progress in this regard;
- In social theory, all agency is social (Giddens, 1984), and this addresses the need for capability theorists to respond more specifically to the social connectedness of individuals (Stewart, 2005).[83]
- Sen has not yet theorised the ideal of agency to the same extent as he theorised most of the rest of his theory (Crocker and Robeyns, 2010:80). Although other capability theorists have done some work in this regard, I propose that this should be done from

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[81] Gough, McGregor and Camfield (2007:5), reporting on qualitative and quantitative wellbeing studies, have already commented that Sen's distinction between well-being as seeing a person from the perspective of her own welfare, and agency goals, which places the interests of others first, is not commonly used and that they will not use it.

[82] The paper of Deneulin and McGregor (2010) on social well-being in the capability approach is an effort to address this concern.

[83] A debate has been introduced on this aspect in the capability approach, although there are divergent views. For the articulation of the notion that the group angle should be stronger, see for example Deneulin (2005); Ibrahim (2006); Deneulin and McGregor (2010).

a broader conceptual understanding of agency than that which is currently in use in the capability approach.

In chapter four I suggest a number of concepts from social theory which might be usefully incorporated into agency analysis in the capability approach, summarised in table 3. This proposal will be taken forward and will also be evaluated in chapter nine, when agency in the *Someleze* group is analysed.

4.3 A proposal for the hermeneutic analysis of agency in the capability approach

I further propose that the analysis of agency in the capability approach be undertaken within a hermeneutic framework, where the emphasis is not only on analysis, but equally on understanding of the complexity of human action. Hermeneutics deals with *meaning and understanding* (Ramberg and Gjesdal, 2005).

The importance of a hermeneutic perspective has been emphasised by the main writers on social agency, Giddens and Habermas. The notion of understanding is highly integrated into the analysis of agency by both Giddens and Habermas. Giddens writes that all social research presumes an element of understanding, and continues: "Research which is geared primarily to hermeneutic problems may be of generalized importance in so far as it serves to elucidate the nature of agents' knowledgeability and thereby their reasons for action, across a wide range of action-contexts" (Giddens, 1984:328). Habermas (1984:30-141) likewise motivates that a hermeneutical moment is essential for understanding. "The task of interpretation can now be specified as follows: the interpreter learns to differentiate his own understanding of the context… from the author's understanding of the context. His task consists of gaining access to the definitions of the situation presupposed by the transmitted text through the lifeworld of its author and his audience" (Habermas, 1984:131). Through this kind of textual analysis Habermas also extends this technique to the analysis of action.

Hermeneutical analysis was indeed historically applied to the understanding of texts, but this has been extended to different kinds of analysis, largely through the work of the interpretative sociologists such as Goffman (1959) and Garfinkel (1967), the founder of ethnomethodology. The theoretical approaches developed within anthropology are also rich sources of interpretative methods. Te hermeneutic approach has also been applied to interview analysis in the discipline of psychology (Kvale, 1996; Henning, 2004:165). According to Kvale, the hermeneutic canons include that one considers the whole, but that one then also does a detailed analysis of parts, which will give an ever better understanding of the whole. The researcher should have a thorough understanding of the context, and be conscious of her own presuppositions. The essence of the approach is to interpret different parts of the interview or text and to connect them to other parts in order to increase understanding of the whole.

Deneulin (2005, 2006) has done valuable work in strengthening the potential role of this perspective in the capability approach. In her analysis of historical patterns in the Dominican Republic she interpreted the meaning of events and past actions. By tracing connections and

opportunities created by means of deliberate agency she provides a deeper level of understanding of historical and social patterns, and links it to agency analysis.

5.4 A list of dimensions for agency analysis

In this section I propose a short list of six dimensions to be considered in the analysis of agency in this study. Reflective judgment and pursuit of goals were suggested by Sen (1985 and 1984) while motivation has been suggested by Gasper (2002) and by Alkire and Deneulin (2009). Autonomy, relatedness and competence have been found to be universal fundamental needs by researchers of the SDT school (Deci, 1992: Deci and Ryan, 1985; Deci and Ryan, 2000). These three fundamental psychological needs "concern the deep structure of the human psyche, for they refer to innate and life-span tendencies toward achieving effectiveness, connectedness and coherence" (Deci and Ryan, 2000:229). Capability scholars have moreover drawn on SDT research and find it compatible with the capability approach (Alkire and Deneulin, 1998; Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007; Alkire, 2008).

The following dimensions are proposed as a list for the assessment of agency and action in this qualitative capability study.[84]

- Reflective judgement
- Motivation
- Pursuit of goals
- Autonomy
- Relatedness
- Competence; the achievement of skills

The first three dimensions on this list therefore reflect a consensus within the capability approach, while the last three represent a research consensus within Self-Determination Theory. Two dimensions deal with concrete skills, namely the pursuit of goals and competence in achievement, while three other dimensions describe personal traits such as motivation, autonomy and relatedness. Reflective judgement, the last dimension, is an over-arching capacity which indicates the person's ability to integrate different aspects of his or her life, both by thinking about it and by coming to insightful conclusions. Together, these six dimensions therefore combine elements of reflection and action, thinking and doing, as well as a rudimentary indication of levels of motivation and competence, which can possibly be further explored. This task will however not be undertaken here. Although there are no dimensions on this list which refer to subjective emotionality, emosions are closely related to all of these dimensions, and particularly to motivation, autonomy, relatedness and competence.

5.4.1 Reflective judgment

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[84] The proposed dimensions for the assessment of agency should be read in relation to diagram 6, at the back of the dissertation.

Sen defines the role of agency in relation to the "aims, objectives, allegiances, obligations" of an individual (Sen, 1985:203). In order to arrive at this, a process of reflective judgement is required (Sen, 1999:78-79). In assessing agency in this project the first step would be to determine whether 'reflective awareness' has been a part of the process of aspiration formulation. Reflection and deliberation is an essential part of Sen's view of agency. Such reflection can be a brief activity, or a comprehensive reflection which would lead to a full and rational account of issues such as aims, values, interests, possible gains and losses, emotional considerations, ideals, and pragmatic issues. Sen (1992:56) points out that a "whim or caprice that a person happens to have at a certain time" will not provide the basis of an agency objective. Such an agency objective should reflect a person's goals and objectives "for which he has reasons".[85] "Serious and fearless" reflection is particularly needed if the danger of adaptation is present (Sen, 1987:11).

Giddens however considers that choice is not so much the once-off rational consideration of an issue, but that "'acts' are constituted only by a discursive moment of attention to the *durée* of lived-through experience" (Giddens, 1985:3). The well-considered action does occur, and usually indicates an act that is not part of the normal routine. Most daily actions are however the result of 'practical consciousness', in Giddens' terminology. This kind of consciousness is close to 'discursive consciousness', but most people do not act discursively most of the time (Giddens, 1985:7). The choice of a life goal would therefore require discursive consciousness, as described by Sen, but Giddens argues that there are numerous acts which most people do not consider extensively.

In political situations reflection can take the form of practical reasoning (Deneulin, 2006:98-100), which is the domain in which political freedom can be established and extended. Such public deliberation and discussion should ensure that free expression is possible, but also that it is connected to actual power to make decisions. Decisions should not rest on beliefs or preferences, but on the attempt to achieve consensus on difficult issues, and thus on the "joint and shared intentions" of all (Crocker, 2008:312).

The subject of reflection and discussion is one which has been extensively explored in development intervention with the poor. The work of Robert Chambers is very well known, and his emphasis on participatory approaches in development intervention has had immense impact on many NGO-type settings. He also pioneered the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and the Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) research approaches (Chambers, 1983; 1997).[86] Equally well known are the ideas of Paulo Freire (1921-1997), author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Freire argued that education is not neutral, but based on class interests.

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[85] Sen (1992:56) also refers to an extensive literature in welfare economics on the reasoned defence of one's objectives, which will not be discussed here.

[86] Participatory Rural Appraisal is a family of approaches where research respondents participate in research on their life situation, and on problems and issues, plans and intervention approaches. They are active research partners and also learn during the process. Rapid Rural Appraisal is similar but is mostly elicited by external researchers.

The poor are subjected to 'banking education', where they receive ideas without being encouraged to reflect. He developed a method of 'problem posing', where an animator would devise a code, such as a poster, on a central problem experienced by the poor. The animator would then facilitate a process of reflection and would ask what the participants see on the poster, whether such a condition really exists, and what the root causes of the condition are. This would lead to proposed action, and back again to reflection, so that the method became known as reflection-action-reflection (Hope and Timmel, 1995; Burawoy, 2012). This method was used with great success by Steve Biko during the South African liberation struggle, in collaboration with Anne Hope,[87] a student of Freire. It was also used in the life skills programme in Khayelitsha, as reviewed in chapter six.

Sen (1985:206) reminds us that agency reflection should consider the 'concept of the good', whatever that might be for a person. It would include the consideration of what the good life would be for one-self as well as for others, and could lead to a reflection on unmet aspirations. The consideration of the good life and aspirations is mutually reinforcing, as these two concepts build on each other. A good life is partly a life where aspirations are being pursued, and aspirations need the articulation of what a person considers to be a good life in order to be congruent and intrinsically motivating. Agency achievement therefore relies on the reflection on goals and values as a primary process, but also on motivation.

5.4.2 Motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic

The findings of SDT scholars on motivation also have relevance for the selection of dimensions to assess action. They distinguish between intrinsic (internal) and extrinsic (external) motivation. "Intrinsically motivated behaviors are those that are freely engaged out of interest without the necessity of separable consequences, and, to be maintained, they require satisfaction of the needs for autonomy and competence" (Deci and Ryan, 2000:233). Apart from behavior linked to competence, this could include aspirations such as intimate relationships, personal growth and community contribution. Extrinsic aspirations such as achieving wealth, fame and image, are goals which are "more related to obtaining contingent approval or external signs of worth, and thus are, on average, expected to be less likely to yield direct need satisfaction and may even distract from it" (Deci and Ryan, 2000:244).

One could then ask what would be required to be able to formulate intrinsic aspirations. The founders of Self-Motivation Theory maintain that all human beings have a natural, 'organismic' tendency towards intrinsically motivated action. These natural tendencies might however be constrained by a highly controlled upbringing, where the notion of control is then internalised in a self-limiting way, or by forms of social control in society, or in the person's life situation. It is also necessary for a person to have a certain degree of inner security to be able to aspire and have goals (Deci and Ryan, 2000:233-248; Ryan and Sapp, 2007:79).

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[87] In the process of the awareness –raising of thousands of young South Africans Steve Biko lost his life in 1977, and Anne Hope lost her South African citizenship from1972 until 1990.

These forms of motivation can be seen on a continuum (Deci and Ryan, 2000:237) rather than as mutually excluding extremes, as had been suggested by earlier research (Ryan and Deci, 2011:50). The continuum is the result of observations in extensive empirical fieldwork in cross-cultural settings. It extends from intrinsic motivation, where the agent is self-directed and where her decision is largely based on her own integrated view of the situation and on an outcome which she will personally find satisfying, to extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation has been found to have at least four possible forms. The first of these is *external regulation*, where the behaviour is based on external rewards or on the avoidance of punishment. *Introjected regulation* is where the person has internalised the external rewards or punishment. *Identified regulation* indicates that the person has identified with the regulation of her actions to the extent that her motivation is self-endorsed and self-directed. Finally, *integrated regulation* indicates a full identification with the regulation of behaviour, so that the behaviour is experienced as congruent and authentic, and people can whole-heartedly carry out the actions required. The actions then also conform to the highest quality (Ryan and Deci, 2011:50-51).

To understand the SDT position, it is important to note that the early experiments in this field were done in response to behaviourist experimentation, where financial and other rewards were seen as the core factor in motivation. In the early 1970's Deci however found that monetary rewards in fact led to performance below baseline, and undermined people's intrinsic motivation. A recent meta-analysis of 128 studies undertaken over three decades confirmed that monetary and other tangible rewards significantly undermine intrinsic motivation, repudiating the earlier behaviourist research. It was further found that even things such as threats, surveillance, evaluation or deadlines undermine intrinisic motivation. On the other hand, recognising people's inner experience and providing opportunities for choice enhances self-confidence and intrinsic motivation. Rewards of all kinds were even shown to have an effect on creativity, cognitive flexibility and conceptual learning. The knowledge of self-initiation and "being an origin" in the words of deCharms, seem to be highly important in motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2000:234). One of the most significant findings regarding autonomy or true self-regulation is its significant correlation with thriving and wellness/well-being, including better health, mental health and vitality (Ryan and Deci, 2011:48; Ryan, 2009). Building on the notion of a *perceived locus of causality*, SDT researchers conclude that autonomy enables a person to act from an inner locus of causality or control, which has the potential to meet the fundamental needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci and Ryan, 2000:233-234; 237).

Intrinsic motivation or 'integrated regulation' are thus the forms of motivation which work best for the achievement of aspirations, especially if such motivation is based on autonomy. Autonomy ensures that the person has power over her own decisions, rather than having to release power to somebody else. Power is also a central dynamic in any group activity, and the analysis of group power and autonomy is therefore very important (Bar-Tal, 2011; Smit, 2009).

5.4.3 Goal pursuit

When one has reflected and deliberated on one's aspirations, goals and motivation, these goals have to be pursued in order to become real. In a discussion on well-being, agency and living standards, Sen maintains that if an assessment changes from checking somebody's well-being to "assessing the person's success in the pursuit of all the objectives that he has reason to promote, then the exercise becomes one of evaluation of 'agency achievement' rather than of well-being achievement" (Sen, 1984:276). This would also apply to the analysis of agency when a person is engaged in the pursuit of objectives that are associated with aspirations. These aspirational objectives would then form part of the agency analysis. Such an analysis could indicate the achievement of actions or the presence of agency freedom.

As seen above, the formulation of goals and objectives is a part of the reflection which precedes action, unless one acts on a whim. The psychological study of goals and needs falls mainly within the parameters of motivational psychology, where research into needs and motivations started in the 1930's with the work of Lewin and Tolman. When the pendulum had swung the other way and cognitive theories became the main paradigm in the 1950's, research on psychological needs was replaced with studies on goals, which relied much more on drive theories and on behaviourism. Human beings were no longer seen primarily in terms of deep inner needs, but more in a Darwinian sense as beings who are driven by instinct and by drives, and whose behaviour can be conditioned by reward or punishment. Goals motivated a person if they increased his functioning, much as Skinner had defined 'reinforcement' in behaviourism. Motivational theorists now ignored needs, and focused solely on goals. They also did not so much study the content of goals, as the processes of goal selection and pursuit (Deci and Ryan, 2000:227-228). When SDT (Self-Determination Theory) came into being in the 1980's, they adopted both needs and goals as part of their empirical programme, as they believe that needs and goals cannot be separated. The realisation of aspirations is assumed to proceed along the same lines as that of goals, as these are closely related phenomena.

5.4.4 Autonomy

Sen (1985:203) stipulates that an agent should be seen as autonomous in the capability approach. The agent in this approach is "someone who acts and brings about change, and whose achievements can be judged in terms of her own values and objectives, whether or not we assess them in terms of some external criteria as well" (Sen, 1999:19).[88] In the capability approach agency and action is therefore not pre-determined, although it is influenced and constrained by many factors, as will be seen in the next section. One of these factors, already discussed under the capability approach in chapter three, is that of habituation and its possible effects on adaptive behaviour.

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[88] Sen's view on agency and autonomy should be seen in contrast to that of Dworkin and Frankfurt, who maintain that people are only autonomous to the degree that their motives are endorsed at a higher level of reflection (Ryan, Kuhn and Deci, 2006:1261).

SDT theorists have done extensive research on autonomy, as a central feature in motivation and goal fulfillment (Chirkov, Sheldon and Ryan, 2011). Autonomy does not operate in isolation – it is closely related to other aspects of agency achievements. Firstly, autonomy is facilitated by "reflective awareness" and occurs within the space of rational and emotional reflection discussed above (Ryan, 2009:1). Secondly, it is reliant on relatedness. Although autonomy deals with one's being centred within one's own reasons, needs and motivations, it does not negate relatedness. On the contrary, the autonomously functioning individual constantly reaches out to others for a range of possible connections (Ryan and Deci, 2011:53-54; Ryan and Deci, 2006:1564-1565). It is thirdly strongly correlated with increasing competence (Deci and Ryan, 2000:234-235), and lastly cannot be understood without reference to the different forms of motivation, which were discussed above.

Autonomy has been variously defined by SDT theorists. Ryan, Kuhl and Deci (1997:706) write: "Self-regulation and autonomy concern the processes through which an organism initiates, coordinates and governs its behavior…it is not equivalent to either independence or freedom from outside influences but rather refers to the holistic integrated functioning through which action is centrally regulated". Deci and Ryan (2000:231*)* define it as a process which refers to volition or will - "the organismic desire to self-organise experience and behavior and to have activity be concordant with one's integrated sense of self". In a later study, Ryan and Deci (2011:49) emphasise that autonomy is primarily "a characteristic of actions" and that people who behave autonomously are "fully behind their own actions". It is also important to consider possible social constraints to autonomy. "Social controls, evaluative pressures, rewards, and punishments can powerfully constrain or entrain behavior, sometimes outside awareness" (Ryan and Deci, 2006:1566). One of the most powerful of these forces might be conditional regard,[89] as in fact advocated by some behaviourist therapies. Children who have been raised in this way exhibit more fragile self-esteem, shorter periods of satisfaction after success, more shame following failure, and more feelings of rejection by and resentment towards their parents (Ryan and Deci, 2006:1567). The ways in which societal dynamics mirror such attitudes towards success and failure will be reflected in the degrees of autonomy which are present in society.

Autonomic agency in the capability approach is therefore supported by recent research in motivational psychology. Autonomy is strongly correlated with well-being in an extensive range of research findings. These motivational theories offer the opportunity to extend the theory of agency in the capability approach beyond the narrow confines of the debates centred on *homo œconomicus.* Alkire and Denuelin (1998) suggest that at least four kinds of motivation which may be used in agency analysis in the capability approach: philia and

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[89] Conditional regard is regard which depends on the (good) behaviour of the other person. It is often used to describe the parent-child relationship, if the child has to conform to certain expectations in order to be loved.

altruism, identity or self-expression, moral rules and virtues, and the motivation to please others.[90]

Autonomy is a central concept in agency analysis in the capability approach and the emphasis placed on it in self-determination theory helps to clarify its centrality.

5.4.5 Relatedness

Relatedness is not only a primary psychological need which is essential for "ongoing psychological growth, integrity and well-being" (Deci and Ryan, 2000:229); it is also an inherent part of most actions that we undertake. It will therefore be an integral part of most aspiration achievements, whether directly or indirectly. In assessing aspiration achievements, interpersonal and relationship skills have to be taken into consideration. This is in accord with the perspective taken by the communitarian philosophers, and discussed by Deneulin (2006:67), namely that community is an inherent and conditional aspect of social agency, and that we can only act if we do so in relatedness.

5.4.6 Competence

When aspirations are reflected on, translated into goals, and contemplated in a way which enhances autonomy and intrinsic motivation, the person can attempt to achieve these goals, usually in a step by step way. The skills and abilities which are gained or improved in this process will be the markers for increased competence. As aspirations are per definition not entirely within the reach of a person, increased competence will almost invariably be a consideration. Strategies which need to be employed to facilitate increased competence will probably be determined during the reflection process, and if this can be done according to the principles of autonomic learning, results will be optimal.

Research on the relationship between intrinsic motivation and competence has shown that a high degree of intrinsic motivation enhances competence, while negative feedback on perceived incompetence undermines intrinsic motivation. Positive feedback on intrinsically motivated competence enhances intrinsic motivation, but only if the person feels responsible for the competent performance (Deci and Ryan, 2000:235).

The six dimensions suggested above will be used to discuss the agency achievements of the participating women in chapter 9. This chapter will now be concluded with a review of research on aspirations, following the publication of Appadurai's paper on the capacity to aspire in 2004.

Together these four conceptual markers form the framework I shall use for agency analysis in chapter nine. I now proceed to the conceptual discussion of aspirations and then of agency.

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[90] Alkire and Deneulin write this paper from the perspective initiated by Sen (1977) of extending the range of agency in the capability approach beyond the constraints of *homo œconomicus* and the theory of revealed preferences. That angle will not be dealt with here.

5.5 Conceptual discussion of aspirations

Aspirations can be defined as a strong desire to achieve an ideal. It is more than an ordinary wish, and has the connotation of a "life dream"; something which is a central motivator for the person involved, and which would express how she sees a 'good life'. There is a strong element of hope (*spero* in Latin) in the word, but not the certainty that the hope will be fulfilled. It is therefore not like a plan which one makes to achieve something; there is an element of uncertainty about whether it will necessarily succeed (Conradie and Robeyns, 2013). One's aspirations therefore express that which you yearn for; that towards which you strive in the hope that you might achieve your aspiration.

There are a few things which can be noted about aspirations. They can firstly be expressed individually or collectively. Collective aspirations might concern issues such as political aspirations, which people feel could be achieved more readily as a collective. "Moreover, one has to distinguish the issue of the *expression* of aspirations from the issue of the *ontology* of aspirations. As far as the latter is concerned, it should be obvious that our aspirations are always deeply context dependent, that is, aspirations are to a significant extent influenced by our social surroundings, our upbringing, the cultural and social context in which we move, the social networks in which we are embedded, and so forth" (Conradie and Robeyns, 2013:562). Further, aspirations are formed as one considers them, possibly over time. They come into being in this contemplation, and might not have existed before, as the person might never have considered them or might have resigned herself to not having aspirations. The formation of aspirations can therefore be seen as a dynamic process, which can be influenced by life experiences and exposure to people or events, and which can be changed and shaped in the process of their realisation (Conradie and Robeyns, 2013).

The phrase 'the capacity to aspire' was coined by anthropologist Arjun Appdurai, in a paper which was widely circulated before it was published. With this evocative idea Appadurai suggests that the ability to have significant dreams for your life is a cultural capacity, and one which the poor often lack. This does not mean "that the poor cannot wish, want, need, plan or aspire" (Appadurai, 2004:69). They simply have less access to the opportunities that facilitate the process of aspiring. He uses the metaphor of a complex navigation process to explore this further, in which the dense combination of pathways and routes associated with fulfilling one's aspirations in any given society, given its norms, customs and constraints, is simply less accessible to the poor. "Where these pathways do exist for the poor, they are likely to be more rigid, less supple, and less strategically valuable, not because of any cognitive deficit on the part of the poor but because the capacity to aspire, like any complex capacity, thrives and survives on practice, repetition, exploration, conjecture, refutation. Where the opportunities for such conjecture and refutation in regard to the future are limited (and this may well be one way to define poverty), it follows that the capacity itself remains relatively less developed" (Appadurai, 2004:69).   This therefore implies that the presence of capabilities or opportunities is an important element which might inspire the poor to attempt the realisation of their aspirations, and that these attempts have to be practiced and repeated. This view is in line with Mary Douglas's definition of poverty "as the condition of not being allowed to enter the system of exchanges" (Douglas, 2004:109).

Appadurai (2004:60) also sees the capacity to aspire as a cultural capacity, which could connect the poor to the future.[91] The capacity to aspire is furthermore a social capacity, and aspirations are never formed by an individual in isolation from society. Aspirations are rather formed "in the thick of social life" (Appadurai, 2004:67). Durkheim and Mead have already stated that there is no individual self which can be identified outside of social structures. The concrete aspirations which people express are embedded within higher order beliefs about life, even though these normative contexts are not always visible when aspirations are expressed. This applies especially to assessments done within the field of economics (Appdurai, 2004:67-68).

For economic research on aspirations it is necessary to distinguish aspirations from preferences. The theory of *revealed preferences* came about as the result of one of the clear failures of utilitarianism.[92] It was assumed that everybody had a complete utility map, which would be accessed by introspection and would form the basis for preferences in economic transactions, but this was gradually seen to be unrealistic. Various proposals were made to address this problem, and Samuelson suggested in 1938 that revealed preferences would be a better way of ascertaining what a person's preferences are. According to this model an individual is defined by her preferences from a set of alternatives, consisting of a stochastic stream of commodity bundles. She is perceived as rational if she is consistent in her choices from these alternatives. A number of problems however remain associated with this position – the assumption of the exogeneity of preferences, in that logical choice is not independent of preference; and the lack of allowance for social influences in indicating preferences (Alkire and Deneulin, 1998:5, Heifetz and Minelli, 2006:1). Revealed preference theory remains dominant, in spite of these problems, and has led to rational choice theory, as discussed in chapter four. Rational choice theory assumes, *inter alia*, that preferences are internally consistent. This has been disproven by recent psychological studies, and it is clear that human motivation cannot be reduced to a thin, formulaic entity or to rationality only (Alkire and Deneulin, 1998:5-6; Basu, 2011:31-33; Kahneman, 2011). Preferences need not be seen within a utilitarian framework, but might also be cast in terms of capabilities.

It is not possible to distinguish clearly between preferences and aspirations as economists use preferences in a number of ways (Conradie and Robeyns, 2013). In terms of their most common use these two terms differ in a number of ways. Preferences normally refer to choices made at present, while aspirations refer to what one wishes for the future. Preferences usually deal with one's own desires or wants, while aspirations can also deal with commitments or social causes, and aspirations are formed within a social context and in interaction with others, while this is usually not the case with preferences (Conradie and Robeyns, 2013).[93] In essence, preferences describe a rather narrow, pre-defined selection

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[91] See the discussion on changes in the interpretation of culture in chapter 2.
[92] Also see the discussion on revealed preferences in chapter 4.
[93] The arguments to indicate the differences between preferences and aspirations in the cited paper were written by Ingrid Robeyns.

process, while aspirations deal with the richness of the multi-faceted hopes of a person within her social context.

Finally, Conradie and Robeyns (2013) also suggest a second possible role for aspirations in human development interventions, namely a capability selection role. The selection of capabilities in the capability approach was discussed in chapter three, and relies on people in a specific context expressing the dimensions which they value. This selection can be done in a range of ways (Alkire, 2008; Robeyns, 2005a; Robeyns 2005c). When agents express their aspirations, they indicate very precisely which capabilities are important to them, and will not refer to those capabilities which they have already achieved as aspirations. "Expressed aspirations tell us which capabilities are the ones that are not realised yet, which makes the voicing of aspirations an excellent tool to decide which dimensions of well-being to target in a human development intervention" (Conradie and Robeyns, 2013:564). Such interventions would include small- and large-scale development programmes, as well as the formulation of development policies. Associated with the above role for aspirations is the possible role of contributing to the identification of missing dimensions for the measurement of human development (Alkire, 2007). In addition to the normal dimensions such as income, longevity and education, those dimensions which are expressed as aspirations by large numbers of people can contribute to our understanding of which dimensions would be important to the poor themselves, for instance the prioritisation of employment in the Khayelitsha research as well as in that which was conducted by Solava Ibrahim in Egypt (Conradie, 2013; Ibrahim, 2011).

I shall now proceed to examine the nature of agency and to explore the ways in which SDT theory can contribute to a deeper understanding of agency.

5.6 Conceptual discussion of agency

In chapter one agency is defined for the purpose of this study as "the capacity of a person to act on choices which came about as a result of reflection and judgement, but also on everyday decisions." The concept of agency will be discussed more extensively here, by expanding this definition.[94]

In the first place it is important to note that agency is seen by capability scholars as the *capacity or ability to act* on behalf of the things one values, or in line with one's concept of *the good* (Alkire, 2009:468; Sen, 1984:206).[95] The relationship between agency and action is therefore comparable to that between functionings and capabilities, although essentially dissimilar. The capability set consists of real opportunities which can be utilised by a person, and functionings are those capabilities which have been selected and achieved. Such

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[94] This discussion is partly illustrated by diagram 6, at the back of the dissertation. The diagram will however only be fully explained in chapter eight, and this discussion can also be read independently of chapter eight.
[95] The idea of agency as the capacity for action rather than action itself does not seem to be followed by social theorists. Giddens does not make the distinction, and Joas consistently writes only about action. It is adhered to here because of the inherent logic and because it is compatible with the capability approach.

capabilities are both well-being freedoms, where the realisation of these can increase personal well-being, and agency freedoms. The latter are also opportunities which can be selected because they are valued, but because agency is subject to personal autonomy and intrinsic control, it is subject to *open conditionality* (Sen, 1984:204) and therefore offers a much wider range of choice than well-being freedoms. Despite the fact that well-being freedom and agency freedom are both components of the capability set, they therefore differ in this regard. In a capability analysis they are however measured or assessed similarly.

Although the freedom associated with agency is then conceptualised in terms of capability, actual agency is already a part of the process of achievement. As such, agency consists of a capacity to act, which is a personal ability within an individual, and the actual action(s) taken. The ability to act can only be seen retrospectively in the actions which were taken, and agency and action therefore have a similar relationship to one another as capabilities and functionings, but that is where the comparison ends, as they are conceptually different components of the capability toolbox.

I also extended the definition of agency beyond that suggested by Alkire (2009:458), namely that "indeed agency cannot be defined except in relation to goals." Although most agency which relates to aspirations would have been carefully considered and brought in line with goals, I consider the formulation that agency is only possible in relation to goals too narrow. The notion of "everyday decisions" in my suggested definition implies that all agency is not always and inevitably related to rational goals which had been subjected to reflection and deliberation, as Giddens also maintains (Giddens, 1979:55). This would be supported by Kahneman's (2011) research which shows that we often act on intuitive and frequently unfounded ideas, and by Elster's "confession" that although we try to be rational at all times most people are not (Elster, 2007).

The next session will deal with a review of research which has been conducted on aspirations since the publication of Appadurai's paper on the capacity to aspire, in 2004. This research provides background information on how other scholars have dealt with the concept in a range of research papers.

5.7 Research on aspirations

Ray (2003; 2006) was one of the first scholars to comment on Apadurai's paper, which led him to a new *set of conceptualisations*.[96] As an economist, he uses preferences as a reference point, and defines aspirations as those desires which have been socially grounded by comparing them to others in the social group and context (Ray, 2006:409). He also criticises the social isolation which is assumed in the theory of revealed preferences, and emphasises the point made above, and by Appadurai (2004:67): "Aspirations are never simply individual (as the language of wants and choices inclines us to think). They are always formed in interaction and in the thick of social life". Ray conceptualizes the theory of *aspirations*

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[96] Ray initially published this paper as a 'very preliminary draft' in 2002 (Bernard *et al*, 2011); then online as a working paper in 2003, and finally as a chapter in a book in 2006. Appaduarai's paper had been circulating since at least 2002. I read the Appadurai paper in 2003 and planned the Khayelitsha research in 2005.

failure by seeing poverty both as the cause and the result of aspirations failure, and suggests a number of conceptual tools to study this phenomenon within economics. The first of these is the *aspirations window*, which consist of those similar people known to a person, whose standard of living should be attainable to him or her. Aspirations and the notion of similarity are inherently multidimensional, and therefore the aspirations window is also multidimensional. Similarity can be further described in the following ways:

i. Individuals are likely to use their peers for a first level of comparisons
ii. These comparisons might depend on the flow of information which reaches them
iii. They might also depend on statistical patterns
iv. Similarity is contextual, and mobility might broaden the aspirations window
v. The different dimensions of aspirations are obviously related to different facets of the aspirations window (Ray, 2006:410-411).

Ray then identifies the *aspiration gap*, which is the difference between the goals one has already achieved, and the aspirations one would like to realise. To achieve these aspirations, one should discuss how such a gap can be filled by deliberate action. He also cautions that the aspirations window must be opened if development is to occur, or there will be no drive to improvement. If it is however opened too widely, it will lead to the "curse of frustrated aspirations" (Ray, 2006:412). *Aspirations failure* can then occur if the aspirations gap is so big that the poor have no hope to be able to overcome it, and do not aspire to be like the rich. This can lead to true fatalism, a belief that what one experiences is one's pre-ordained destiny, or to aspirations failure, which is still easier to overcome than fatalism. Aspirations failure can also consist of a situation where the poor desire to be like the rich, but where the gap is too large and the cost of what it takes is too high compared to the rewards. The ideal situation for closing the aspirations gap is where there is "a chain of observed, local steps between the poorest and the richest" (Ray, 2006:413).

Appadurai's paper was received with interest by the academic community, and led to a range of research projects on aspirations, mostly in the field of economics. Whilst a number of economists had been researching aspirations from an economic perspective for some time (see Ray, 2006:410 note 1; Ibrahim, 2011:5), Ray's conceptual framework discussed above led to a range of new research programmes, a number of which will be discussed here. The ways in which these researchers apply Ray's concepts, namely the aspirations window, the aspirations gap and aspirations failure, will be emphasised.

Heifetz and Minelli (2006) use both Appadurai and Ray's work to pose the differences between preferences and aspirations. They raise the problem that the poor are seen as rational decision makers, with 'perfect foresight' as to the difference their decisions might make to their future choices, in the revealed preference theory. Esther Dufflo (2006) already showed that the poor cannot be treated as entirely rational decision makers when faced with harsh budget constraints, as the condition of poverty impacts on their decision making. This standard economic idea is therefore not compatible with some groups. Heifetz and Minelli suggest that, rather than to use the norm of 'transparency', that is the perfect foresight of the person under discussion, 'consistency' of choice could be seen as a more appropriate

theoretical marker. If the person does not regret her decision after the event, and if her preferences and aspirations have adjusted accordingly, her decision is seen to be 'self-justifying'. Self-justifying decisions are those which have been accepted because of socialisation and have become social norms over time. It is however exactly these socialized decisions which might form an *aspirations trap* for the poor (Heifetz and Minelli, 2006).

Another research programme which is based on Ray's questions and proposal (and on Appadurai's notion of the capacity to aspire) is that of the iiG at Oxford (Improving Institutions for Pro-Poor Growth). This project researches the nature and extent of aspirations failure in Ethiopia. Their research questions are: What are the determinants of the capacity to aspire? What is the link between aspirations and individual economic behavior? How could aspirations be affected by economic and social change? How can aspirations be affected by deliberate group action? The research focuses on measuring the aspirations gap, discovering the dimensions and size of the aspirations window, and identifying other information which can influence aspirations and lead to aspirations failure. The key constraint in the research is the endogeneity of the aspirations window, which can be overcome by the generation of robust instruments.[97] Bernard, Dercon and Tafesse (2011) describe a research project undertaken within this programme in 2007, to determine the effect of fatalism on people's *aspirations gap*. 1192 households were targeted, and two people were interviewed in every household. The survey included some interesting questions on locus of control – whether the respondents were primarily influenced by social norms or by personal convictions. One such question was to choose between the following statements:
1. *Each person is primarily responsible for his/her success or failure in life*
2. *One's success or failure in life is a matter of his/her destiny* (Bernard et al, 2011:10).

The researchers found that about one third of the sample is fatalistic about their opportunities. They also found that role models were from local villages, and that the aspirations window was therefore small. Their overall results support the claim that fatalistic individuals are likely to be the ones with lower aspiration gaps, and that they would be more prone to aspirations failure (*Ibid*:14-15). The authors then link the findings to the economic behavior of these small farmers, in not being keen to take long-term loans for productive purposes. As the link between the research and actual economic behaviour is not yet proven, their research will focus on this aspect in future. Esther Dufflo's comment might have relevance here, namely that small-scale farmers might often be in such a vulnerable position that they cannot take the risk of investment. The cost might be the survival of their families, and that cannot be an option (Dufflo, 2006:372). Bernard *et al* therefore have an economistic argument which might not take social reality sufficiently into account.

Dalton, Ghosal and Mani (2011) develop a theoretical framework to study the psychology of poverty and aspirations failure within economics. The degree of their attention to psychological dynamics offers an additional dimension which is lacking in some of the other

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[97] See www.iig.ox.ac.uk/research/16-aspirations-ethiopia.htm

studies discussed here. They use this behavioural analysis to argue that the rich and the poor have the same preferences, but that the poor are more susceptible to pessimism about success and to aspirations failure. The poor also have a smaller aspirations window.

The measurement of aspiration gaps by Copestake and Camfield (2010) is a sophisticated study which measures multidimensional aspiration gaps in Bangladesh, Thailand and Peru. Well-being is measured here as the difference or the gap between aspirations and the satisfaction experienced with having achieved them, and defined as "personal satisfaction with achievement of life goals" (Copestake and Camfield, 2010:621). They emphasise both the subjective aspect of poverty, how the poor experience their condition, and the objective aspect, which is what people have and do relative to absolute needs (*Ibid*:617). The subjective views of the poor are elicited by encouraging respondents to describe their well-being in local terms, and by avoiding arbitrary aggregation of their aspirations and frustrations across different life domains. The multiplicity of aspirations is strongly emphasised.

A study by Dorward (2009) aims at establishing a set of conceptual markers for aspirations by suggesting that the poor exercise one of three strategies in regard to aspirations and livelihoods. They can do so by maintaining and protecting current wealth, or 'hanging in'; by 'stepping up' or expanding assets and activities, or by 'stepping out', which is accumulating and investing in new assets.

Dorward's markers can be compared to a study done by Carter and May (2001) of 1200 black households, in which they compared poverty figures in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa for 1993, just before the first democratic election, and again in 1998. They found that about two thirds of households below the poverty line in 1993 remained there in 1998, and a considerable number of households that were just above the poverty line in 1993 had fallen below that line by 1998. Their analysis shows three "classes", which show the highest levels of persistent poverty, the lowest levels of upward mobility and the highest levels of downward mobility. These classes are a small group of marginalised households with few assets beyond unskilled labour; a group which is dependent on remittances, and a group which was dependent on the secondary labour market in 1993 (Carter and May, 2001). Others fared better, largely due to better service delivery. Of those who are either below the poverty line or moving up and down over the line, a large number are subject to asset or entitlement shocks. When such shocks occur, there are two interacting forces which can impact on such households: resilience and sensitivity. Resilience indicates the ability of the household to recover, while sensitivity indicates the depth of the shock to the household (Davies, 1996). Each of these forces is again dependent on other factors, such as general capabilities, social support, etc. Negative events can thus have a severe impact on the marginal and vulnerable (Carter and May, 2001; Adato, Carter and May, 2006). These kinds of shocks do not seem to be taken into account in Dorward's model.

A last study to be discussed here is that undertaken by Solava Ibrahim in Egypt in 2011. By means of grounded theory she analysed two open-ended qualitative questions which she had included in a detailed well-being survey:

- What are the three most important things that you wished to achieve in life but couldn't?
- Why couldn't you achieve them?

The methodology has similarities to the application of gap theories, where the person's aspirations are compared to her assessment of the extent to which she has achieved these aspirations, as seen for instance in the work of Copestake and Camfield discussed above. Like Copestake and Camfield Ibrahim avoids arbitrary aggregation, but she places special emphasis on the understanding of the respondents of why they have not been able to succeed (Ibrahim, 2011:12). She finds that amongst these women aspirations failure occurs primarily in terms of education and employment, and that there is an intergenerational transmission of aspirations failure.

Of the studies discussed above, Ibrahim's study is probably the closest to the Khayelitsha research. It also deals with women in a developing country and with their aspirations, their poverty and the institutional constraints they are faced with. It also asks the question how aspirations affect capabilities and human development, and it also attempts a qualitative, multi-faceted exploration of causation. As a survey it is different from the action research conducted in Khayelitsha, and some of the findings are also different, probably due to contextual differences.

5.8 Chapter summary

In this chapter I discussed the relationship between two key concepts in the research, namely aspirations and agency. I started with the motivation of four proposals. The first is that aspirations are agency-unlocking, which will be explored in the discussion of the empirical material. The second proposal is to extend the use of agency in the capability approach by means of the incorporation of social science constructs, and the third proposal is that the analysis of agency in the capability approach be extended by means of a hermeneutical analysis of agency. Then I proposed a list of dimensions for the assessment of agency in this study. The concepts *aspirations* and later *agency* were subsequently defined and discussed. The chapter was concluded with an overview of research on aspirations following the publication of Appadurai's paper on the capacity to aspire in 2004.

The next two chapters deal with the empirical research process and with some of the research findings.

Chapter six
Research methodology employed for fieldwork

In this chapter I shall discuss the design and conceptualisation of the research on which this study is based, and the ways in which the research was operationalised over the period between 2005 and 2012. The overall research methodology is that of action research (AR), into which a number of other research methods were integrated. Although the initial research design had been quite tight, I adjusted this to reality concerns as the research progressed, as will be shown.[98] I shall therefore discuss the ways in which this research was influenced by the fact that it was action research, and also how that fact impacted on the nature of the research.

A second consideration in this chapter is the fact that the research is largely a qualitative assessment of capabilities and of agency within the capability approach. The initial household survey was however designed as a quantitative survey. I shall therefore also discuss the ways in which qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in a complementary way.

6.1 Research objectives and research question

The initial research design was formulated in a funding proposal which was submitted to SANPAD[99] in 2005.[100] The research question in the proposal was: *Can women in the poorest sector of society improve their lives by attempting to realise their own aspirations, and what impact could this have on their position as women, and on their poverty?* The original research design was largely retained throughout the study, except that the capability approach was introduced as a theoretical framework when the research process started. By that time I had become convinced that Appadurai (2004:63) was correct that aspirations could potentially be explored and understood in relation to the capability approach. I then changed the research question to: *Can deliberate attempts to realise their aspirations, with limited support, increase the capabilities of the poor?* The notion of *aspirations* was therefore used as a hypothetical key to the development of the women in the study. The assumption was that a person who joins a group in order to realise her aspirations is not readily able to do so on her own, or she would have done so. The reasons why she had not been able to realise her aspirations would correlate with her lack of capabilities/opportunities, or with aspects of agency (Sen,1985b).

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[98] The idea of an action research programme came from a previous research study I had done in Khayelitsha, where the women asked for the research findings to be taken forward into action (Conradie, 1992). It could not be done then, but this research was designed to accommodate an action research approach.
[99] South African Netherlands Programme for Alternatives in Development. http://www.sanpad.org.za/sanpad2011/
[100] Prof Pieter le Roux, then Director of the Institute for Social Development at the University of the Western Cape, was the official project leader, but I was responsible for the conceptualisation of the research design and for the actual research and its management.

The initial objectives of the study, as formulated in 2005, were:

1. To assist 90 – 100 unemployed or footloose employed women with dependents to realise their three most significant aspirations.

2. To engage them as partners in the research programme, building their own needs and questions into the process, as far as feasible without changing the nature of the research.

3. To conduct a survey on their current situation and their aspirations.

4. To assist them to explore the nature and range of their own personal skills and assets, that might be used as a basis for further development, and as a basis for their mutual support of each other.

5. To help them to articulate the three most significant aspirations they have at present, and to formulate these as significant things they currently want to change.

6. To make a basic capacity building programme in development and life skills available to one group, to facilitate a reflection-action process in another, and to set up one group with at least one well-coping peer mentor, or "positive deviant", and subsequently to assess the relative effectiveness of these three forms of intervention.

7. To link all the women on an individual basis, or as small interest groups, to resources and networks that might be useful in achieving their aims, as well as to local government structures and to social movements.

8. To evaluate, in an on-going process and at the conclusion of the study, whether assisting women in this way might have a long-term impact on their socio-economic status, the sustainability of their household livelihoods, on their position as women in society, their dependence on others, and on their personal sense of happiness and fulfilment.

9. To assess the significance of the findings for training and capacity building programmes in development, and for strategic direction in the work of NPO's.

During the consolidation period before the research started, I also extended the notion of having the respondents as research partners into the objective that they should have control over their own projects. Because action would be taken by the women, I considered it important that they should have a sense of autonomy over their own projects and their own lives. The following objectives were therefore added:

10. To facilitate a process, using people-centred methodologies, in which the respondents take control of the project themselves, excluding the programme administration and finances.

11. To explore the link between capabilities, aspirations and assets in the women's progress out of poverty.

A third change was brought about when I met with the Site C management committee for SANCO in 2005.[101] In reviewing the research objectives, they approved of everything except

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[101] See 3.4, Research activities and outcomes 2005-2012, phase 1.

the fact that the respondents should have dependents, as they said that would encourage young girls in early and mostly extra-marital pregnancies, which they considered detrimental to their wellbeing. As this requirement had only been included to ensure that the volunteers were settled in the area, as I found their argument reasonable, and as the approval of the SANCO committee was essential for the continuation of the research, the requirement was dropped at that stage.

Two of these changes were directly related to the fact that the research model was that of action research, namely the fact that the women would have more autonomy on decisions regarding their own lives and work, and the fact that the requirement of having dependents was dropped. The changes that were made in July and August 2006, during and after the life-skills training programme, were also made because the programme was following an AR approach. In these cases I submitted to decisions made in the group, also because I thought these were reasonable. These changes were:

1. The number of aspirations the women were asked to select for action was reduced from three to one, as they chose to only engage in income generating projects.
2. The idea of evaluating three methods of facilitation and education in the life skills programme, namely being taught by community mentors, by people using a Freirean method, or by an ordinary teaching programme, was formulated at the proposal stage. It was implemented during the life skills course, but ran into problems from the start. The most important constraint was that the idea of different teaching styles was not a concept the women seemed to relate to. For them it was a question of *who* the facilitators were, rather than *how* they facilitated. A related problem was that although they were divided into three different groups, they went where they wanted to be. The weekly evaluation questions on the method followed were simply not responded to, probably because they were not understood. I therefore admitted that this had been an inappropriate objective, and dropped the comparison of facilitation methods from the research (Conradie, 2009).
3. Because the women decided to work in a group, I also did not attempt to link them individually to local government departments and to social movements. I did negotiate a partnership with the local and provincial Department of Social Development, but because the officials are overextended and because of rapid changes in the management structure and policies that was not a very productive partnership. SANCO and its street committees turned out to be the main social movement in Site C and the women were already involved in those structures.

The objectives and the research question discussed above were used to design the research process, which will be dealt with in the next section.

6.2 Research design, activities and outcomes, 2005-2012

In this section an account will be given of the research plan, and of how the research activities and outcomes intersected. Firstly I shall however write about the overall research approach, action research (AR). This will be compared to participatory action research (PAR), as I also used elements of PAR. The main theoretical frameworks which are used for the analysis are the capability approach and the interpretive/constructivist theories.

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6.2.1 Definition and description of Action Research and Participatory Action Research

Action Research is a term which is used for research which sets out to solve problems in the context within which they normally occur. Kurt Lewin is seen as the founder of the methodology, and his first paper described a study on conflictual relations in industry (Lewin, 2005:3-17 [1944]),[102] while he shortly afterwards wrote a paper on minority problems, in which he refined the methodology. He suggested that in the process of analysis, fact finding, conceptualisation, planning, implementation and evaluation both practitioners and theoretical researchers solve problems and at the same time generate knowledge (Lewin, 2005 [1945]). The field of action research developed through numerous other contributions (Brown and Tandon, 2005:26 [1983]). Researchers provide the research expertise, while clients or research subjects provide insight and information and can decide what information they would like to sanction (Brown and Tandon, 2005:40). "Action Research is inquiry in which participants and researchers cogenerate knowledge through collaborative communicative processes in which all participants' contributions are taken seriously. The meanings constructed in the inquiry process lead to social action, or these reflections on action lead to the construction of new meanings" (Greenwood and Levin, 2000:96). It can therefore either mean that the collaboration of the researcher and the research subjects enables the re-interpretation of the situation, which can lead to new forms of action, or that the collaboration is the action, which can lead to new understanding. Action Research can particularly be used to reconstruct the relationship between universities and society into one where both parties have equal stature (Greenwood and Levin, 2000). It is often applied in industrial and workplace settings in the developed world (Cooke and Wolfram Cox, 2005:291-466), which seems to bring about a primary emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness (Ellis and Kiely, 2005:94 [2000]).

Participatory Action Research was introduced in the 1970's and 1980's, and was primarily developed in developing countries (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:59). It can be conceptually distinguished from AR, but some scholars see it as a form of AR (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2000:567; Babbie and Mouton, 2001:63). Its epistemological foundations are in critical theory, in the understanding that research can be normative and emancipatory, and can take a position on and play a role in changing some of the harmful conditions which it identifies. Its goals include the conscientization of research participants, as well as strengthening their research capacities and generating autonomy (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 322-325). There are at least two main traditions in PAR, namely a Northern and a Southern tradition. This distinction was made when some Southern scholars argued that the term had been co-opted by writers in the north, for doing something different from what the term originally meant. In developing country contexts, where it has particularly flourished, PAR is seen as a tool to address power imbalances and justice in the world of conceptualisation and understanding, as well as in political systems. Colombian Marxist scholar-activist Fals Borda (2005:36 [1987])

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[102] Cooke and Cox (2005) edited four volumes of historical and current publications on AR, designed to bring all the most important papers on AR together. For papers that had been included in these volumes I shall give the 2005 publication date for the sake of page numbers, with the date of the original publication in a second set of brackets.

describes (Southern) PAR as follows: "The participatory discourse or counter-discourse…, initiated in the Third World - quite probably as an endogenous dialectical response to the actions of the developed world – postulates an organisation and structure of knowledge in such a way that the dominated, underdeveloped societies articulate their own socio-political position on the basis of their own values and capacities and act accordingly to achieve their liberation from the oppressive and exploitative forms of domination imposed by opulent (capitalist) foreign powers…" Rahman (2005, Vol.11:12 [1982]) describes the methodology of the research-cum-activism which is involved in (Southern) PAR. It is *praxis*, based on the Freirean principles of social investigation by the poor into the conditions of their poverty, and the formulation of action plans based on this assessment. Fals Borda also linked PAR to development and change when he published a paper on how five communities each took in an outside researcher, who played the combined roles of activist, adult educator and researcher. In this process "we tried to understand together and in practice the nature of social processes for radically transforming the social and economic milieu and for building people's power in rural areas" (Fals Borda, 2005:3 [1984]). The researcher in this model is thus a 'change agent' who facilitates empowerment and political change. The research subjects are seen as active partners - or at least participants - in the research, and are ideally actively involved through all the phases of the research, from design to interpretation. PAR promotes democracy and autonomy in research and generally. It is a cyclical process, where linear planning often has to be supplemented by incremental planning, if the researcher becomes convinced that an input by the research participants justifies a change in the research design. The results of the research are also normally diffused to the participants.

It is however important that the research process should not suffer from the participatory nature of PAR, and that consideration should be upheld throughout, but in the final analysis the emphasis is more on egalitarian access and accountability than on rigorous procedures (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:314-331). The researcher(s) can therefore be seen to have the responsibility of ensuring that the research process will be reliable and the results valid, while at the same time ensuring that the respondents are actively involved. Their accountability is ideally both to the global research community and its standards as well as to the participating respondents. In the Northern tradition, however, PAR is most often used in the interest of organisational problem-solving and efficiency (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:59-61).

Both AR and PAR have been criticised by a range of commentators. Regehr (2005) [2000] maintains that AR is a valuable tool for social and humanities research where positivist research often does not allow for subjectivity, but that is should be open to evaluation by respondents, peer reviewers and policy makers. Greenwood (2005) [2002] also points out that it provides a much needed space, but he criticises the negligence of many action researchers, especially in terms of scholarly rigour. They also often do not write up their findings, and peer review then does not happen. He also maintains that action researchers often ignore macro-structural problems, and confine their research to local issues.

There could be validity in these objections, and they should be considered in a case by case example by peer reviewers, who should be particularly aware of the need for sound research

methodology and validity. Kemmis and McTaggart (2000:578) however point out that scholars representing different schools of thought see different epistemological purposes in research, and the notion that all research should be "objective" is only one view. Another perspective is to see the research reality in a specific historical context, which can be viewed objectively and subjectively. Both the researcher and the respondents are influenced by the research, and the respondents particularly *live with the consequences of the transformations they make*" (Kemmis and McTaggart (2000:592). For this reason it would not be ethical not to involve them in the research, either as participants or as full partners.

I would see this as a key issue in terms of the design of PAR. If the lives of the respondents might be changed by the research, as in the case of my research being described here, I would see the researcher as ethically bound to give the respondents as much decision making power as is necessary for them to feel that they have been responsible for the change in their own lives. Where broader political systems might be challenged by research, such as in the research described by Fals Borda, a different set of considerations should be debated. As my research falls outside that particular category, I shall not discuss the issue here, except to state that researchers have to be careful and considerate when they put their respondents at risk for the sake of a research programme. If a programme of political activism is being researched, as Fals Borda does, people presumably voluntarily engage in that risk. In that case the concern would be to ensure that the political agenda does not obscure or endanger the scientific one.

Further questions have been raised about whether validity can always be controlled in AR, as research subjects are the main source of validation, and whether the less structured research conditions are sufficiently coherent to ensure good research practice (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:328; Greenwood, 2005:186 [2002]). Concerning validity, Checkland and Holwell (2005:433 [1998]) recommend that the "recoverability" criterion be emphasised in AR, that is, a research design which ensures that research material such as case reports, focus group reports, and minutes can be recovered by third parties in order to substantiate findings and claims.

Greenwood (2005:186-187) summarises the concerns which many feel about AR:

> "Conducting research means developing habits of counter-intuitive thinking, questioning definitions and premises, linking findings and process analyses to other cases, and attempting to subject favourite interpretations to harsh collaborative critiques…Through the collaborate process of question formulation, data collection, data analysis, and testing in action, action research is the social science approach that is most likely to produce something that could legitimately be called rigorous research. However, it cannot do so unless action researchers are competent in research methods and discourse and serious about increasing the research values and methods associated with their work."

Research results should therefore constantly be checked with the research respondents, which would be a feedback tool and assist the researcher in the validation of the data (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:328-329). At the same time it is important to be aware that the validity of both quantitative and qualitative research responses based on the self-assessment of respondents are much more difficult to verify than more objective measurements might seem to be. People might be more optimistic or pessimistic than reality warrants, or have hidden agendas, and the social researcher has to be constantly vigilant. Du Toit (2007) however points out that the opposite can also be true; positivistic measurements might be more "slippery" than they might seem at first glance and the social researcher needs to compensate by analysing findings in relation to their context. Du Toit discusses poverty measurement and poverty lines, but his insight could be equally valid in relation to research generally. He cautions that assessments should always be seen within the perspective of the underlying situation, and the ways in which human beings are "structurally inserted" in society (Du Toit, 2007:10). Such an analysis should draw on the identification of different kinds of power relationships in households and in society. The (critical) qualitative researcher therefore has the additional task to analyse and interpret the responses of his respondents in the light of such social structures. Such a task will always be imperfectly performed, but must nevertheless be attempted.

Blum (2005:311) [1955] writes that the following is required of an AR researcher: a multi-disciplinary conceptual framework; a conception of reality where emotions and statistics carry equal weight; a theoretical framework which includes both macro and micro elements; "the greatest possible development of scientific tools"; extensive self-awareness, and an awareness of the ethical problems associated with both action and inaction. The literature on action research indicates that it is concerned with solving "real problems…in specific locations" (Greenwood and Levin, 2000:97).

In summary, AR has the advantage of including subjective interpretations of issues by the people who experience them, and ideally this should be complemented by the objectivity of the best possible research practice, by a thorough analysis, and by external review. There could be bias in the self-reported observations of respondents, but these reports could at the same time provide information which "objective" assessments lack. The challenge for AR and PAR researchers is to optimise the advantages which the combination of subjective and objective approaches offers, and likewise to minimise the disadvantages.

I shall now show how I used both of these methodologies to investigate the problem of the socio-economic marginalisation of women in Site C, Khayelitsha, and also how both AR and PAR informed the actions the respondents took towards realising their aspirations.

6.2.2 Action Research as the main research methodology
The research on aspirations and capabilities which this dissertation is based on was designed as an AR programme, with the intention to generate knowledge on the relationship between aspirations and capabilities. A second and equally important objective was to assist the women in reflecting on and achieving aspirations which would help them to live a valued life.

The primary theories I used to guide the research process have been the capability approach, which was discussed in chapter three, and the interpretive/constructivist[103] paradigm within the field of social theory and qualitative social research.

The collaborative action in the fieldwork was thus designed to generate new understanding and theoretical insight, and to also contribute to the personal and socio-economic development of the women. This emancipatory aspect of the research that was developed throughout, but especially during the life-skills course, has elements of PAR, although it is not confrontational political activism. As could be seen above, one of the research objectives has been to engage the participating women as "partners in the research programme, building their own needs and questions into the process, as far as feasible without changing the nature of the research." The goal has therefore been to provide an emancipatory platform which the women could use to achieve their own goals of personal growth.

To achieve this goal I designed a research process which was scrutinised and approved in the course of the SANPAD funding application, and which was based on conventional research criteria. Because I conducted the research as an AR process I had to however be flexible, and as indicated, I had to change elements of the research design on a number of occasions. These were not big changes, except for the women's decision to work collectively rather than individually. This decision and the ways in which it reflected power issues in the group will be discussed in the analysis.

Achieving a balance between a reliable research process and the *praxis* part of the project was often difficult. It was made easier by the fact that I was clear that the project belonged to them, and that my role was essentially investigative and secondly supportive. Our agreement was based on the fact that I would find a limited amount of resources for their project, that I would monitor the process and that I would interview them from time to time. In all interviews and focus groups there was a sense of open and honest exploration, and of them benefitting from the reflection as well. This indicates that a level of trust was established between the research team (the interviewers/translators and I) and the participating women. At the same time there were underlying dynamics of race, class and culture which meant that we had to continuously engage in discussions on how we saw a situation, in order to be able to move forward. There are countless examples of discussions where I tried to understand 'the township way' and one or more of the women tried to grasp the dynamics of how the 'other world' works. One example might be helping Vida to be accountable to donors, a process which was fraught with tension. The underlying trust in the group however helped us to confront these differences in understanding.

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[103] Constructivism is the study of how individuals reconstruct experiences in order to reach better understanding (Lincoln and Guba, 2000:166).

While action research has been the main and overarching research method, I designed the research process to include a range of other research strategies and methods, in order to be able to achieve different tasks.

6.2.3 The interpretive paradigm and the hermeneutical tradition in social research

The interpretive/constructivist paradigm and its relationship to the hermeneutical tradition in philosophy will be reviewed here. All social science research can be seen as interpretive (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:19). At a very general level, there are four major interpretive paradigms within social theory which shape and structure qualitative research. These are the positivist and post-positivist, constructivist-interpretive, critical and feminist paradigms (Olesen, 2000:215-255). I shall use all of these, except the feminist paradigm, not because it is not relevant for the research, but because some of its guiding principles will be included in the constructivist-interpretive and critical paradigms, rather than to have an additional focus. I shall furthermore discuss the ways in which the different paradigms will be incorporated into my analysis under point 3.4 below. I shall use the terminology as Denzin and Lincoln (2000:22) use it, namely that the overall paradigm is interpretive or constructivist-interpretive, and that ethnomethodology is the type of research which is undertaken within this paradigm. Although there are differences and distinctions between the interpretive and constructive-hermeneutical positions (Lincoln and Guba, 2000:163-188; Schwandt, 2000), I shall not concentrate on the differences, but rather use these approaches as a continuum. Where I do distinguish between the two approaches, as in the nature of the researcher's role, I shall indicate it. This less demarcated position is supported by Clifford Geertz (1993) who predicts the "blurring of genres" in qualitative research and a general trend in qualitative theory to shift the boundaries between different paradigms (Lincoln and Guba, 2000:167).

In chapter two I already looked at the ways in which interpretive theories have changed in the last few decades, especially concerning cultural analysis. These changes will be taken into account in my own analysis. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:17), having reviewed the phases in this theoretical reorientation, write that "[a] triple crisis of representation, legitimation and praxis confronts qualitative researchers in the human disciplines. Embedded in the discourses of poststructuralism and postmodernism…these three crises are coded in multiple terms, variously called and associated with the *critical, interpretive, linguistic, feminist*, and *rhetorical* turns in social theory." Two key assumptions of qualitative research now become problematic: that the recorded text can capture and represent reality, and that traditional criteria can be used to interpret and evaluate qualitative research. These are crises of representation and of legitimation, and they shape the third, the crisis of praxis, which asks: "Is it possible to effect change in the world if society is only and always a text?" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:17). At the same time the representation and legitimation of such practice has to be constantly questioned and analysed.

According to scholars who work in the interpretive paradigm, the ways in which these processes can be questioned include the researcher's self-examination. The researcher has to situate herself, as well as the research subjects, in history and consciously deal with elements of diversity and conflict (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:19-20). She has to see herself as a multi-

cultural subject, and clearly enunciate her conceptions of herself and of the 'other.' She should have a clear understanding of the contextual history of the research and of different research traditions, as well as of the ethics and politics of research.

However, the exact ways in which the researcher can discover meaning from what she observes, differs in different interpretive and hermeneutic traditions, although they all strive for *Verstehen* or understanding (Schwandt, 2000:189–196). The interpretive tradition and conservative hermeneutics have a number of features in common. Dilthey recommended that the researcher achieves *empathetic identification*, which means trying to capture the intent of the actor from the inside, as it were. "It is an act of psychological re-enactment – getting inside the head of an actor to understand what he or she is up to in terms of motives, beliefs, desires, thoughts, and so on" (Schwandt, 2000:189). This is an interpretive stance, and it is also held by the proponents of objectivist or conservative hermeneutics. A second position is held by writers in phenomenological sociology and by ethnomethodologists, including Garfinkel (1967), who attempt to understand the ways in which we interpret our own and others' actions as meaningful within the social life-world. Two tools are used in this process: *indexicality*, which signifies that the context in which it is used gives meaning to a word or act, and *reflexivity*, which emphasises that words do not only mean something, they also do something as a speech act. A third tradition is based on the analysis of language approaches, following Wittgenstein. These three traditions all view human action as meaningful, they respect the fidelity of the life-world, and they believe that human subjectivity can be understood objectively, by means of the various strategies discussed here (Schwandt, 2000:192-193).

Philosophical hermeneutics has a different position. Gadamer and Taylor, inspired by the work of Heidegger, hold that such strategies are unnecessary. "Understanding *is* interpretation" (Schwandt, 2000:194), and such understanding is basic to the human experience. Researcher bias should not be deliberately eliminated, but should rather be consciously understood. "Thus reaching an understanding is not a matter of setting aside, escaping, managing, or tracking one's own standpoint, prejudgments, biases or prejudices. On the contrary, understanding requires the *engagement* of one's biases" (Schwandt, 2000:195). This kind of understanding can be best achieved in a dialogical situation, where we take the risk to test our preconceived ideas. "In other words, meaning is negotiated mutually in the act of interpretation; it is not simply discovered" (Schwandt, 2000:195). This also endorses the conclusion that a completely correct interpretation cannot be achieved. Gadamer (1975) therefore emphasises that the task for hermeneutics is not to develop a procedure for understanding, but rather to explore the conditions which lead to understanding.

The ways in which the research activities and research paradigms interrelate will now be explained.

6.3.4 Research activities and outcomes, 2005-2012

The research is mostly qualitative in nature, although I shall argue that it is more than that. The assessment of whether the actions of twenty five of the women led to an increase in their capabilities will be done as a qualitative capability assessment.[104] For each of these analytical processes a set of research tools was used, as will be shown here. The value of the qualitative research has been that a good relationship was established with each of the women who belonged to *Someleze*, and within that relationship there was space for reflection on their aspirations, their intentions and their actions.[105] These reflections assisted them in the pursuit of their goals, and also offer material for the research analysis.

In addition, the research process also included an initial household survey which provides the benchmark data for the 103 women who participated in the survey. Although this is a minor part of the research and a small survey, the statistics on the women's income, also from state grants, on employment patterns in households, and on food security in their homes gives an important perspective on their poverty. These facts could not have been deduced from the qualitative interviews. This survey will be discussed in the next section.

In this study I draw on the Q-squared approach by using a quantitative study as a supplementary information source in a qualitative study. Generally speaking, the quantitative approach rests on "intersubjectively observable" data, while the qualitative approach is based on the notion that "social phenomena depend for their existence, and/or significance, on the meanings ascribed to them by social actors" (Schaffer, 2013:21, 23). Q-squared research is however not simply a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods – it refers more broadly to the approach and type of information used, and to the target population and their degree of involvement (Schaffer, 2013:6-8). This study deals with a specific target group which was very actively involved in the research process, and the type of inference is largely deductive. The discipline within which it is applied ranges from a broad social science application to the capability approach, which was formulated within the disciplines of economics and philosophy.

The AR process was strongly supported by participatory research activities, based on dialogic inquiry and critical hermeneutics (Schaffer, 2013:26, 27). At the same time a number of efforts were made to increase the validity of the qualitative data, as will be described below. The nature of the AR process followed in this research was therefore both empirical and hermeneutic. In addition, the essence of the capability assessment done here was to record the increase in functionings over a period of time, and to assess the impact of that increase in a person's life. The qualitative use of the capability approach is therefore interesting in this regard, as the monitoring of actions in order to assess increased capabilities is based on "intersubjectively observable data", and not on the meanings attached by the actors. In this sense it is neither truly qualitative/hermeneutic nor quantitative/empirical, but maybe more

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[104] See chapter eight.

[105] In the context of Khayelitsha and Cape Town, race is equated with levels of power, and there was therefore an inevitable component of unequal power in this relationship. By examining it ciritically, I tried to consciously equalise power in the research.

essentially Q-squared. Both the AR process as well as the assessment of capabilities can therefore be said to be essentially Q squared.

The value which the Q-squared approach adds to this study is that the investigation is contextualised within Empiricist and hermeneutic debates on what poverty is and how people can escape it, and it explores the ways in which exercising agency can contribute to overcoming poverty, possibly by means of attending to aspirations.

Between 2005 and 2012 a research programme was put in place in Site C in Khayelitsha to meet the different research objectives which were formulated in the proposal. In table 1 the different activities are listed, with a timeline, an indication of the number of women who were active at each stage, the role I played as researcher/facilitator in each specific phase, and the research methodologies which were used. This is related back to the different theories which support each method. Lastly I show which research objectives were met in each part of the research programme.

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Table 3: Research activities and outcomes 2005 - 2012

Phase and time	Women active N =180	Activity	Researcher's role	Additional information	Research methodology	Theory	Objective addressed (see p.1)
Phase 1: Nov. 2005- Feb. 2006	180	Community meetings to announce project and ask for volunteers. Community mentors introduced idea of working on an aspiration they want to realise. First record of aspirations, 33 responses: 29 earning an income, 4 helping others.	Organised meetings, invited mentors as speakers, asked women to write their aspirations	103 women were selected by leaders of SANCO, local civic organisation	Action research	Interpretive theories	1: all phases
Phase 2: Feb. - May 2006	103	Household survey and long aspirations interview with 25 qualitative questions. Interviews conducted by sets of two Xhosa speaking researchers.	Organised survey. Processed survey material	Material processed by SPSS	Survey with quantitative and qualitative questions	Positivist and interpretive theories	2: research partners 3: survey 4: explore skills and assets 5: articulate aspirations
Phase 3: June – Aug. 2006	50	Eight week life skills training course, one day per week, on personal skills; social analysis on race, class, gender and culture, using their own life histories. Input on aspirations.	Organisation and presentation of course.	Final choice made: employment creation groups chosen: catering, sewing, hairdressing, community care.	PAR: Empower-ment, emancipa-tion (ongoing)	PAR based on critical theory	5: articulate aspirations 6: life-skills training
Phase 4: Sept. 06 – Aug. 07	40	Fundraising for employment groups. Women worked in small groups on their activities. Regular monthly meetings with whole group.	Fundraising for training.	Raised R100,000 for training and equipment.	AR Participant observation	AR Ethno-methodology	10: self-help programme

Phase 5: Sept. 07 – Nov. 09	40	Sewing group: received machines and training, sewed on contracts. Catering group: training. Group split due to conflict. Home based care group: 2 different training courses, started care activities.	Fundraising for centre from which to work.	2 containers donated, funds for a centre.	AR	AR	10: self-help programme
Phase 6: 2008	30	10 life histories recorded and 10 interviews and a focus group conducted on agency	Conducted interviews and focus group and recorded life histories	Paper presented at HDCA conference Delhi106	Qualitative research, life histories	Interpre-tive theories	8: evaluation and assessment
Phase 7: 2010	30	25 interviews conducted on actions undertaken in support of aspirations, achievement of aspirations. Increase of functionings and realisation of capabilities assessed.	Conducted interviews, did assessment	Centre used daily. Programme is ongoing. Researcher held regular meetings until end 2010, but from then onwards they worked largely on their own.	Capability assessment	Capabili-ty theory	8: evaluation and assessment 11: assessment of capabilities
Phase 8: Sept. 2012	30	7 interviews conducted on rural-urban flow of people, money and information in households	Conducted interviews		Qualitative, structured interviews, open-ended questions	Interpretive theory	8: evaluation and assessment

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[106] Conradie (2008).

In this section, I shall explain table 3 in greater detail, by discussing the phases in numerical sequence.

Phase 1: Proposal and negotiating entry

When the research proposal was accepted by SANPAD by mid- 2005, I started to negotiate entry into the community of Khayelitsha. I was assisted in this process by Ms Kwane Mbewu, an experienced social worker at the Philani Clinic in Site C, who was also granted a PhD scholarship as a part of the research allocation.[107] She recommended that the project should be approved by the local branch of SANCO, the South African National Civic Organisation, as well as by the KDF, the Khayelitsha Development Forum.[108] This was done, and we reported to and were supported by these two important organisations throughout the run of the programme.[109] The guidelines for the selection of participants were also negotiated and discussed with the SANCO committee for Site C. These were that the women should be unemployed or footloose employed,[110] should live in Site C and should not be earmarked for moving elsewhere during the upgrade of the area,[111] should be in the 18 to 55 year age group, should be highly motivated, and would not be permitted to continue if there were to be a substance abuse problem, which was increasing in the area at that time.[112] Lastly there was a requirement that the women should have dependents, which the SANCO committee vetoed, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

The research team at this stage consisted of Ms Mbewu, Ms Thandi Guwa (a fieldworker), two Masters students who also received SANPAD scholarships, Salome Meso and Nkululeko Solontsi, and Pamela Tsolekile, also a Masters student. I led the team. The students were all post-graduate students, and Ms Solontsi and Ms Tsolekile both had long years of experience in the field of development. All of them furthermore spoke Xhosa, either as mother tongue or as a second langauge. The whole team played an invaluable role especially during the first year of the research, also because of their extraordinary dedication and commitment.

Three large and well-advertised meetings were initially held in local venues in Site C to announce the project and to ask for volunteers. Four local mentors were prepared to assist, and one of them, Vicky Ntozini, the highly successful owner of Vicky's Bed and Breakfast and a very charismatic speaker, led the presentations at these meetings.[113] She told the women in these meetings how she came to Cape Town to find a better life, and what she had had to do in order to achieve it. In the same way, she said, they could work out what they wanted to do and attempt to reach these goals. We asked the women who attended these

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[107] Ms Mbewu eventually decided not to pursue her PhD studies.

[108] See the discussion on political structures in chapter 2.

[109] This also led to collaborative research on the role of these political structures in Khayelitsha. See Thompson and Conradie (2011a, 2011b).

[110] For a deeper discussion of footloose labour, see Breman (1996), where he shows how casual labour mobilisation in Asia often relies on very disadvantageous terms for the labourer.

[111] In spite of this condition, women who were planning to move later nevertheless joined the research, which made later follow-up processes very difficult.

[112] Only one person was refused admission into the programme on the grounds of alcohol abuse.

[113] Vicky's life story appears in the dedication and her role will be discussed in more detail in chapter eight.

meetings to fill in an application form. One hundred and eighty applied to participate, but only 33 filled in what their aspiration was at that time. Of these, 29 reported that they wanted to earn an income, and 4 reported that they wanted to help others.

As we had decided to work with between 90 and 100 women, the applicants had to be reduced to this number. We went back to SANCO and asked them for assistance with this task. The Street Committee leaders in the SANCO Committee, who knew all the applicants, selected 103 who they thought would be able to benefit best from the programme, based on the selection criteria and on their knowledge of the participants. It is not possible to know how exactly these decisions were made, but the criteria that the participants had to be between 18 and 58, and had to live in the area, were strictly applied. Leaving it to the SANCO committee also gave them a sense of co-ownership. What became evident in the course of the research was that many of the women in our programme were Site C leaders in some capacity or another, which was a positive element in the action component of the programme.

The *theoretical orientation* during this phase was that of AR, as we offered a project based on a previously formulated research question and process, but also based on the active participation and contributions of the research participants and of the local political organisations which sanctioned the programme. As the literature earlier in this chapter suggests (Greenwood and Levin, 2000:96), we provided the research knowledge while the research subjects have considerable knowledge about local conditions, about their own lives and thoughts, and about the realities which they face on a daily basis.

Phase 2: Household survey and aspirations questionnaire

During this phase objectives 2 to 5[114] were operationalised. This mainly entailed an interview with the 103 selected volunteers on the questions contained in the general and the aspirations surveys,[115] and the processing of the data. The household survey was done as a background study, in order to have benchmark information, to understand the profile of the women we were working with, and to assess whether they were representative of women in the community. The aspirations survey was central to the study and to answering the research question.

I compiled the general Khayelitsha survey from a selection of questions which had been asked over three waves of the Cape Area Panel Study.[116] This questionnaire was made available to us by Nicoli Nattrass[117], our research partner in the SANPAD application and then manager of the CAPS. I selected questions which would give us a general overview of who the women were, what the profiles of their households were, and what general patterns

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[114] See page 127 for the list of research objectives.
[115] See Appendix 1.
[116] See http://www.caps.uct.ac.za/
[117] Nicoli Nattrass is professor of Economics and Director of the Aids and Society Research Unit within the Centre for Social Science Research at UCT in Cape Town.

and trends could be identified in the group. This procedure had the advantage that these were well-tested questions, on a comprehensive range of issues, which had already been standardised.

I compiled the aspirations questionnaire on the basis of my experience in working with women in different settings, such as women's leadership training programmes I had been involved in in different Cape Town townships over a period of two decades. I circulated it widely and benefitted from comments from Trudeke Vuikt, the first SANPAD research partner for the project, and also from Ingrid Robeyns, our second SANPAD research partner. The questionnaire is also contained in Appendix 1. I decided to combine the two interviews, as it is very difficult to ensure that one reaches the same person twice under township conditions. The interviewers were therefore asked to start with the identifying details in the household survey, then to turn to the aspirations questions, while respondents were fresh, and then to complete the rest of the general interview. Interviews differed in length, depending on the quality of the responses, but on average an interview lasted about an hour.

The interviews were all conducted in Xhosa, but due to the fact that reliable transcription services from Xhosa into English were not available, I decided not to ask the interviewers to record the whole interview verbatim in Xhosa. Instead, 16 post-graduate student interviewers were selected who could work in teams of two. Both interviewers had to be fully bilingual, with a good written and oral understanding of English and Xhosa. One would be responsible for establishing rapport with the respondent and for asking the questions, while the other had to record detailed notes of the responses in English. I conducted four intensive training sessions with the interviewers on campus, and emphasis was placed on the basic rules of good interviewing and recording (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:251-256).

For the sake of safety and of quality assurance, we decided to ask the research subjects to come to the Philani clinic hall in Site C on three consecutive Saturdays, and to conduct the interviews simultaneously. The chairs in the hall were arranged in such a way that privacy and confidentiality was assured, but that I could see what was happening in the interviews. Students were only paid for the interviews when a completed report was submitted and approved. In spite of this, some interview reports were still not entirely complete, and a field worker visited those respondents in order for us to have a complete data set. A research assistant then collated all the information in SPSS, and on a household roster. Some of these findings will be reviewed in chapter seven.

The *research methodology* which was employed for this part of the research was conventional positivist survey research. The household survey dealt with household information and with some perceptions on cultural and political practices. Here only quantitative questions were asked, which were all coded for subsequent analysis. Even though I was able to use existing survey questions, care had to be taken to include the most relevant questions for the purpose of understanding the respondents (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:230–244). It was also necessary to have sufficient information without having an excessively long questionnaire. Sensitive questions such as those dealing with HIV or Aids

were eliminated in order not to damage trust early in the action programme. The survey findings were then analysed by means of descriptive statistics.

The aspirations survey contains qualitative material that will be analysed through interpretive theories such as ethnomethodology. Ethnomethodology has been described as the "methodology of the people" or the way in which knowledgeable "ordinary" people make sense of their own lives (Babbie and Mouton, 2011:30). Based on the work of Schultz and Garfinkel, ethnomethodology investigates "the unstated "rules" and assumptions which people draw on to make their own actions understandable to themselves and other people" (Babbie and Mouton, 2011:30).

Phase 3: Life-skills training course

The next component of the action research programme was a life-skills course, to assist the women with the reflection which would be required to choose the aspirations they wanted to pursue. From June to August 2006 we conducted eight one day life-skills training sessions in the Oliver Tambo Hall in Khayelitsha for the women who had participated in the survey.

Of the 103 women who completed the survey, fifty eight did not attend the life skills course. The profile of the women who had dropped out was a young group, with a mean age of 27.5 but a most frequent age of 23. Their plans for the future consisted mostly of getting employment, studying or owning a house or a business. Many participants emphasised that their life would be very different to the life they live now. It seems that the slow and intensive process which they would have had to commit to did not appeal to this group.

I designed the life-skills course to equip the women for the tasks which lay ahead. This included reflections on themselves, as well as skills of working together, which were dealt with in the three small groups. A summary of the training schedule is contained in Appendix 2. We presented the topics for each discussion according to three different teaching and facilitation methods: I presented the course by means of teaching and other inputs; the two student assistants, Salome Meso and Nkululeko Solontsi, facilitated a Freireian problem-posing group[118], and the peer mentors presented their own experience and advice, but on the given subjects. All the groups included a lot of group discussion.

We spent a significant period of time on the first day on group formation in the large group, as a cohesive group is known to function better (Forsyth, 2010:118-122). Each person drew a picture of a river, representing their lives, with major events presented as objects on or near the river (Hope and Timmel, 1995, vol.2:37). As we shared our life experiences, we realised that our lives were similar in many ways. We used these life experiences as the basis for an analysis of the impact of race, class and gender on women's lives, as well as for reflections on who we really are. This was followed by discussions on the women's values and visions,

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[118] I trained them in this methodology before the course started.

and by sessions on "how society and the economic system work". Problem-solving, networking and planning for the achievement of one's aspirations concluded the sessions.

During the last session when we asked the women to choose their own activity which would reflect their aspiration, they divided themselves into four activity groups, in order to be able to prepare themselves for paid employment in groups. This came as a surprise to the researchers, as the aspirations they had expressed in the first meeting as well as in the aspirations survey were often quite individual in nature. They had nevertheless caucused and decided to rather work in groups for this phase, and formed sewing, catering, hairdressing and care groups. They also resolved that they would work towards a women's centre in which they could work collectively and which they could use to support other women in the area. As I do not understand Xhosa and therefore missed out on informal discussions, I do not know how this decision was made. It is likely that some of the leaders might have influenced the other women to choose collective projects, although all the women were very committed to working as a group for at least the first year, until group conflicts started to emerge. In retrospect it would have been better to return to this decision in the whole group to ensure that it was generally accepted, as the decision to work collectively determined the nature of the whole project.

All participants were asked to evaluate all sessions of the course, but a limited number of course evaluations were received. In evaluating the training some of the members said the following:

❖ There is hope inside me and now I see the way to survive, and I hope that after this training we will succeed in life.
❖ In these eight weeks it was very nice and helpful. My life has changed. There is hope inside me now.
❖ The training was good. It gave me strength. Now I know how to survive.

The *methodology* for the life-skills course was that of empowerment, critical reflection and emancipation. As such it is closely related to PAR, as discussed above, although this training was not linked to an overt political agenda. Theoretically PAR is based on critical theory, which has undergone extensive development since being established by the Frankfurt School. Critical theory is associated with resistance to *status quo* power configurations, and with "partisan, critical inquiry committed to social criticism and the empowerment of individuals" towards praxis or action (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:160). Habermas (1972) identifies technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge, and the last category is supported by the critical social sciences. Apart from the generation of knowledge, critical social science undertakes "to determine when the theoretical statements grasp invariant regularities of social action as such and when they express ideologically frozen relations of dependence that can in principle be transformed" (Habermas, 1972:310). The purpose of the life-skills course was therefore to facilitate a process of critical self-reflection and critical reflection on society and its economic and political structures, in order to prepare the women for possible emancipatory action.

Phases 4 and 5: Working in small groups and individually

During the next phase the women started to pursue their aspirations in small groups. They did this on their own initiative and organised the ways in which they were going to work themselves. In phase four, which occurred during the first year after the life-skills course, the sewing group met in one of the member's homes on a daily basis. They initially worked on borrowed sewing machines, while I did fundraising for proper equipment. One of the participants, Nomsa, taught the others, as she had exceptionally good sewing skills, and her aspiration was to find a group she could teach. Motivation was high and they regularly sold their produce. The hairdressing group went for training, and the catering group started to bake together. Some members of the care group assisted Vida, who had already started her own care organisation.

At the end of 2006 the Cape Town Quaker group donated R100.000 to the project, which enabled us to move to the next phase of the work. In February 2007 the groups all met for a training session and did a SWOT analysis for their groups. Based on this, they were ready to start with training for their proposed activities. Sewing machines and stoves were bought and training courses were arranged. The care group did two courses in home-based care, one with the Red Cross, and another later with St Luke's Hospice in Cape Town. For this second course they were given the opportunity to do a short internship in a hospital, which was very valuable experience. The women continued to work in small groups and individually and to gradually increase their skills and income. They also formed a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) and called it *Someleze*, meaning *we strengthen each other*.

The women were also still keen to have a women's centre to work from, and the final year students in architecture at the University of Cape Town designed a cost-effective centre for them. Land was allocated by the councillor, and I did more fundraising. The repayment of the loan which they could access was however beyond their means and at a meeting held on the 26th of July, 2007, they decided not to accept it. By this time two shipping containers had been donated to the group, and they decided to rather have the containers adapted to form three work spaces, one for the sewing group, one for the catering group, and one for the care group. They voted to use the money which remained from the Quaker donation to make these changes, and soon after they started to use this space on a daily basis. This continues at the time of writing, and a group of about ten women work at the centre every day.[119] Others work from their houses or in small groups with other women. For about three years, between 2007 and 2009, I called regular meetings with the women to support their efforts, but since 2010 they have been functioning largely on their own or with the support of other facilitators.[120] In 2012 the sewing group saved an amount of R15.000 which they used for essential expenses and for holiday bonuses to members. They are seen as a 'success story' in the area. The leader of the catering group died from TB in March 2013, having been HIV positive for many

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[119] This includes some women who had joined the group more recently.

[120] Ms Kim Smith, a former Masters student at UWC and a member of the Hluma Trust, played an important role in assisting the sewing group towards financial independence by mentoring them and teaching them business skills.

years. The leader of the care group has also been HIV positive for more than a decade, and these problems have had an impact on the functioning of these groups. The hairdressing group disbanded in 2007. Many individual women have made efforts to realise their aspirations on their own. In chapter eight I shall ask whether the different activities the women undertook, on their own or jointly, increased their functionings and their capabilities. The *research methodology* followed during this phase was action research, while the method of participant observation was used to collect data. I was both facilitator and researcher, and as the women were encouraged to run the programme as they collectively decided to, I was able to sit in on many discussions and to observe how they work towards a consensual decision, or allow a conflict to mar their progress. I made notes and recorded their meetings, initially with Ms Guwa translating, and later based on the translations of those who speak English. I also reflected on the group process. One pertinent problem was that I lacked a research partner for this part of the programme and that it turned out to be lonely work, where I was not always sure that my observations were correct. As the researcher and facilitator I was also not necessarily objective in my observations, and had the responsibility of having to simultaneously attend to many aspects of the programme. On the other hand my past experience of teaching and supervising students in group work was helpful in this situation. The theory which supported this part of the research was ethnomethodology, and also general group work theory (Northern, 2001; Toseland and Rivas, 2001).

Phase 6: Life histories and agency

Early in 2008, while phase 5 was in progress, I recorded the life histories of ten of the most active women in *Someleze*. I also conducted individual interviews with them on their own agency, and conducted a focus group discussion with the interviewees on the results of the interviews. The life histories were done in a free narrative style with prompting questions where needed, but without a pre-determined structure. The agency interviews were conducted according to a structured questionnaire.[121] This started with a general discussion on poverty in Site C, moving to more personal questions, and eventually to an example of how the respondent actually engaged her agency to deal with a difficult situation. The life histories, the agency interviews and the results of the focus group discussion will be used in the analysis of the findings in chapter eight.

Life histories give an overview of a range of experiences in a person's life, and it is significant which themes the research subject chooses to highlight in selecting the facts that she presents (Babbie and Mouton, 2011:502). In writing up such a life history, a researcher has to pay attention to these themes, and to how they highlight particular phases or facts in the person's life. This can be done in a number of ways, ranging from an objective or a scholarly-historical to an artistic or a narrative rendition. Life histories are always the story of an individual life, but at the same time they are contextually situated, and both these aspects must be emphasised (Hatch and Wisniewski, 1995). In recording the ten life histories, I used the women's own words as far as possible, to create the sense of a personal story. One of the

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[121] See Appendix 3.

first stories I recorded of one of the participating women, Vida, was published on her organisation's website.[122]

Phase 7: Interviews on actions taken to achieve aspirations

In April and May 2010 I recorded 19 interviews with *Someleze* women I was still in contact with, again using a formal interview schedule.[123]. I added information on six women who had been active and analysed the data for 25 women. In these interviews we gathered information on all actions the women had taken in support of their attempts to achieve their aspirations, and I assessed the impact on their functionings and capabilities, in order to answer the research question. This will be comprehensively discussed in chapter eight. I also included a few questions on the interview schedule to update the household information we had obtained in 2006, in order to be able to relate this to changes in their general situation. I summarised the findings from these interviews on an Excel sheet. I was assisted in these interviews by two very able researchers who had also participated in the 2006 interviews, Pamela Tsolekile-de Wet[124] and Nombuyiselo Dziba. We used the same strategy where one researcher would pose the questions and the other would record the responses. I attended most of these interviews. A small number of these interviews were conducted in English, in cases where the interviewee was completely bilingual. In these cases I could do the recordings.

The theoretical approach which was used for the assessment of progress was the *capability approach*, which has been discussed in chapter three. The way in which it was applied will be dealt with in chapter eight.

Phase 8: Interviews on the rural-urban continuum

A last set of interviews were conducted in 2012 with seven of the women who had been most active, and who had also taken part in the agency interviews, whose life histories had been recorded, and who were interviewed again in 2010. These last interviews focussed particularly on the ways in which the households that these women belong to constitute themselves along urban-rural lines, and what meaning the women attach to this continuum. I again added a few general evaluative questions. This last interview schedule can be found in Appendix 5. Pamela Tsolekile-de Wet was again prepared to assist with the interviews and with the translations of the content. She knew all the women well and this created a sense of trust and ease in the interviews which meant that the women were prepared to share in a very personal and deep way.

The theoretical perspective used for this phase was again the interpretive paradigm. The work of Andries du Toit and David Neves of PLAAS at UWC was particularly useful in informing this part of the research (Du Toit and Neves, 2007, 2009), as it provides an anthropological analysis of a number of case studies of women who are connected to households in both the

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[122] See www.iliso.org
[123] See Appendix 4.
[124] When we started in 2006 Pamela was a Masters student. She is currently employed by ACCEDE as a Researcher.

rural and urban areas. Du Toit and Neves (2007) found that the urban and rural economic activities of the women they were studying ranged from formal and informal to marginal economic activities, which were however thoroughly interdependent.

6.3 Discussion of my roles as researcher and facilitator and the dynamics in the group

As researcher my role was to be meticulous, to record all processes with care, and to be accountable to the funders, by means of regular reports. It also included being accountable to the participants, to SANCO and the KDF. From the start it was my conviction that people do best if they are able to be as autonomous as possible, and in the action research I took as few decisions as possible on my own, and involved the women as much as was feasible. I used an image they know well, and explained that I was like the secretary of an organisation, who would write things up and make sure that people remember when things must be done, but that they were all the collective chairpersons, who would decide what has to happen. A committee was chosen and took on some of the leadership roles, but as could be expected, this experiment with democracy left space for power issues to emerge.

Only when there was deep conflict did I attempt to facilitate a conflict resolution process. This happened for instance when the catering group was given R500 seed money to buy provisions and the women in the group had a dispute about how the money had been spent. In this particular case I tried to use the group interaction to solve the problem, but the blaming and shaming had already gone too deep and this group split up. After some time the sewing group also decided that their chairperson, Francis, was too autocratic, but this was resolved quite well. Upon being confronted she decided to leave the group and work from her home, and Nella took on the leadership and made a success of the project.

The fact that I did the fundraising unavoidably gave me power in the group, but I made every effort to be transparent and equitable in my role as custodian of the funds. I created a Trust Fund, called *Hluma*,[125] with other professionals. The women knew that the money was kept safely, was regularly audited, and that I gave them regular account of the state of the finances. They also met and worked with the other *Hluma* trustees. The fact that I brought resources into the project was a "noise factor" in the research, as it was never possible to be completely certain that a person was not there for the money or resources only. On the other hand, individual women never received money, but only machines or stoves and training, while their progress depended on the actions they took themselves.

6.4 Ethics and ethical considerations:

The following ethical statement was approved by the research administration at the University of the Western Cape, as well as by SANPAD:

In accordance with international ethical standards, the project will observe all considerations necessary to comply with ethical research standards. These will include:

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[125] *Hluma* is a Xhosa word which means 'to grow'.

1. *Informing participants what the programme is about and getting their written agreement that they are interested in participation. If people are not interested, they will not be included in the research. Consent forms in English and Xhosa are attached.* [126]
2. *If participants want to withdraw at any stage of the process they would be free to do so.*
3. *The nature of the project involves more benefits than risks to participants, but if risks would become obvious in a given situation, it would be pointed out to the participant(s).*
4. *Research findings will from time to time be reported back to participants and other community members.*
5. *Confidential material will be respected at all times.*
6. *All researchers in the team will maintain a high standard of professional conduct and will be aware of and sensitive to cross-cultural issues.*
7. *Research material will be stored at ISD for a period of at least 7 years after the completion of the project.*

One could possibly argue that it is unethical to invite women to work on their aspirations in an area where many have failed before, and where the structural conditions are such that it is difficult to succeed. Such an argument might be that it would be better to attempt to change the constraining conditions, than to expose people to possible failure and disappointment. This argument should be considered, as the structural constraints that face the women in Khayelitsha are indeed considerable. Strategies should indeed be considered to diminish such constraints. On the other hand, Sen argues convincingly that "[w]e have to recognise…the role of freedoms of different kinds in countering these afflictions. Indeed, individual agency is, ultimately, central to addressing these deprivations" (Sen, 1999:xi). In this research project, women were invited to exercise their own agency to counteract the social and political constraints they face, and as social structures and agency operate in complementary ways, I would argue that this aspect of the research was not unethical.

In this chapter I reviewed the different research methods which were used in the study. Action Research (AR) forms the broad frame within which the research took place. I specifically explored the nature of AR as a dynamic process which is adjusted when reality concerns necessitate it, without sacrificing scientific requirements and standards. I also looked at the study as an example of Q-squared research, where Empiricist and hermeneutic methods are used in creative combination to assist in poverty assessment and exploration.

Having discussed the research methodology, I shall now review some of the research results in chapter seven.

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[126] See Appendix 6.

One of the groups in the life-skills training in 2006.

The sewing group in 2006, working in the house of one of the members.

Bongeka, one of the care group members, assists in Vida's care organisation. Meals are provided for toddlers and their mothers.

Chapter 7
Some research findings: benchmark survey and recorded aspirations

In this chapter I shall present the findings of a number of the research components discussed in chapter six. This will include the findings of the household survey from 2006, and the aspirations surveys conducted in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2010. The emphasis in this chapter will be on the findings only, with some discussion and clarification, as a detailed assessment of capabilities will be done in chapter eight. The life histories, agency survey and the last interviews conducted in 2012 on the rural-urban continuum will be integrated into the analysis in chapters eight and nine. The household survey provides background information on the respondents, which enables me to contextualise the findings and to assess whether their capabilities had increased. The different aspirations surveys provide essential information for the assessment of the increase in the women's functionings in chapter eight. The description of the different research phases in table 3 on pp. 138-139 will put the different research activities onto a timeline.

In chapter two I described the recent and more distant history of the inhabitants of Site C in Khayelitsha and its long-term adversarial effects, both in terms of the impact of colonialism and more recently of apartheid policies. In this chapter the research findings will allow us to see how far the participating women had come by 2006 in their efforts to become integrated in an urban area, and what their aspirations are for further progress.

7.1 Household survey: background information on respondents

The preparation for the survey and the way in which the questions were chosen was written up under the research methodology in chapter 6, under phase 2. The household survey was conducted at the onset of the research programme in 2006, and many things have changed since then. It therefore serves as a benchmark to indicate what conditions were at the beginning of this long study. Some of the information, such as how housing and services have improved, was updated for 25 women in the 2010 interviews. The survey data reported here is therefore background information which tells us what the self-reported situation of 103 women was in 2006.

The household questionnaire firstly contains a household roster, which lists members of the household, their relationship to each other, and the number of people who received different forms of state grants. There is some information on capabilities such as health, education and employment as they were in 2006, and also some information on perceptions and attitudes.[127] The information which was gathered in the survey simultaneously provides data on livelihoods and livelihood-related issues, although the income data itself is not reliable. This enabled me to pursue the relationship between livelihoods and capabilities, which I analyse in the conclusion of the thesis.

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[127] See the household questionnaire in Appendix 1, after the aspirations survey.

7.1.1 Findings

Firstly some of the findings will be summarised in a number of small tables, and then I shall discuss different aspects of the findings, including assets and capabilities which the women had access to in 2006. This will be followed by a general discussion of poverty and structural opportunities in the survey findings, and the meaning that has for the research. There were 103 women who took part in the survey. Their ages varied between 19 and 59, with a mean age of 29.7 and a median age of 27. The seeming inconsistencies in the numbers are likely to be the result of the fluidity of households, with members in different household sites.

Household survey 2006
Table 5 a: Children and child support grants

Age group	19 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 +
Number of respondents	70 (68%)	15 (14.5%)	13 (12.5%)	5 (5%)
Number of children per household	0 (40 households) 1 (22 households) 2 (8 households)	0 (4 households) 1 (3 households) 2 (3 households) 3 (5 households)	0 (2 households) 1 (1 household) 2 (2 households) 3 (2 households) 4 (5 households) 7 (1 households)	1 (4 households) 2 (1 household)
Number of children of respondents who received child support grants	43	14	9	0
Number of women who received child support grants	52	15	3	2

Table 5 b: Education completed

Grade 7 and lower	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Post school qualification
7.8%	6.9%	4.9%	19.6%	30.4%	25.5%	3%

Table 5 c: Days without enough food in last 30 days

None	1 – 7 days	8 – 14 days	15 – 21 days	22 – 30 days
5%	70%	9%	7%	2 %

Table 5 d : Health

Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent
6%	14%	38%	9%	33%

7. 1.2.1 Age groups

The first question is who the 103 women were who participated in the programme in phase two. We had invited women between the ages of 18 and 55 to participate. The largest number was in the 19 – 29 year old group. 68% or 70 of the women came from this age group. They also had more children than any other age group, although they were usually financially dependent on the household in which they lived. There is a sudden drop in the 30 – 39 year old group to 14.5% of the total, and the next age group, the 40 – 49 year olds, formed 12.5% of the total. The last 5% of the women were between 50 and 55. Many of the over 40 year old women were very active in the programme and were in fact the mainstay of the activities. This was not unexpected, as we later learnt that many of them are leaders in the local community structures such as street committees, Ward Forums of the City Council, and Khayelitsha Development Forum Ward Forums.

7. 1.2.2 Assets: housing and sanitation

An important aspect of the women's lives is that a high percentage of them lived in shacks made from a range of materials in 2006. One hundred interviewees responded to the questions on housing, and three responses were missing. Seven households had a brick house, of which two of the women, Nella and Patricia, had made the cement bricks for their homes, and had also built the houses themselves through the Homeless People's Federation. The largest group, 51 of the women, lived in a shack made of corrugated iron or other permanent

material, and 42 had less permanent shacks, made of less permanent materials. Of these, 12 had a flush toilet inside the dwelling; 31 had a flush toilet on site, but outside; 35 shared a communal flush toilet, 19 had no access to a toilet, and 3 used the bucket system or a pit latrine. The lack of proper toilet facilities for all was an emotive issue, and has since become the focus of a campaign in the whole of Khayelitsha. All the people who participated in the survey had a connection to electricity in 2006. Some of those connections would however have been illegal connections, made from an existing source, as can be seen on the photo of Site C in chapter two. It is an important service though, as many of the fires that regularly occur in informal housing areas and which devastate whole areas, are the result of the extensive use of candles and paraffin for light and energy.

7. 1.2.3 Assets: employment and income

As far as *employment* is concerned, only 21.6% of the women had worked for gain in the last 10 days before the interview. There were however about 60% of households which had at least one job for the household. These jobs were nevertheless mainly low-skill and low-income employment, and some of the categories are domestic work, field worker for Escom, Industrial cleaner, Vodacom consultant (selling airtime), parking marshal, hawker, brick maker, council worker, seasonal fruit packer, Aids assistant in clinic, and security guard.[128] Some potentially more well-paid jobs included a Development Project Coordinator, a contractor, and work in retail and marketing.

The mean *income* reported per household was R1704 and the mean number of occupants in a household was 5.4. This means that an amount of about R315 was available per person per month in the average household, for all expenses, which was well below the poverty line. Although self-reported household income is very often unreliable, it was clear from interacting with the women that poverty was pervasive.

In addition, our survey respondents reported that many of them are reliant on grants for survival. 71% of parents in Site C said that they received child support grants for 66% of all children in the sample. In the 19-39 year old groups there were ten parents who reported that they receive grants without reporting that their child receives the grant. This suggests that some of the children were in the rural area or in other households while the mothers tried to make a living in the urban area. This is in line with findings by scholars such as Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson (1996), Du Toit, and Neves (Du Toit, 2007; Du Toit and Neves, 2008; 2009a) that household boundaries are extremely porous and changeable in the rural-urban migration context of the Eastern and Western Cape of South Africa. This is also borne out by the narratives of the women's lives, which show how children are placed with different family members at different times.

The reported income is given in the following graph:

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[128] These are rather formal job titles given by the respondents, for what in reality is often a form of footloose employment.

Graph 1: Money received in a typical month
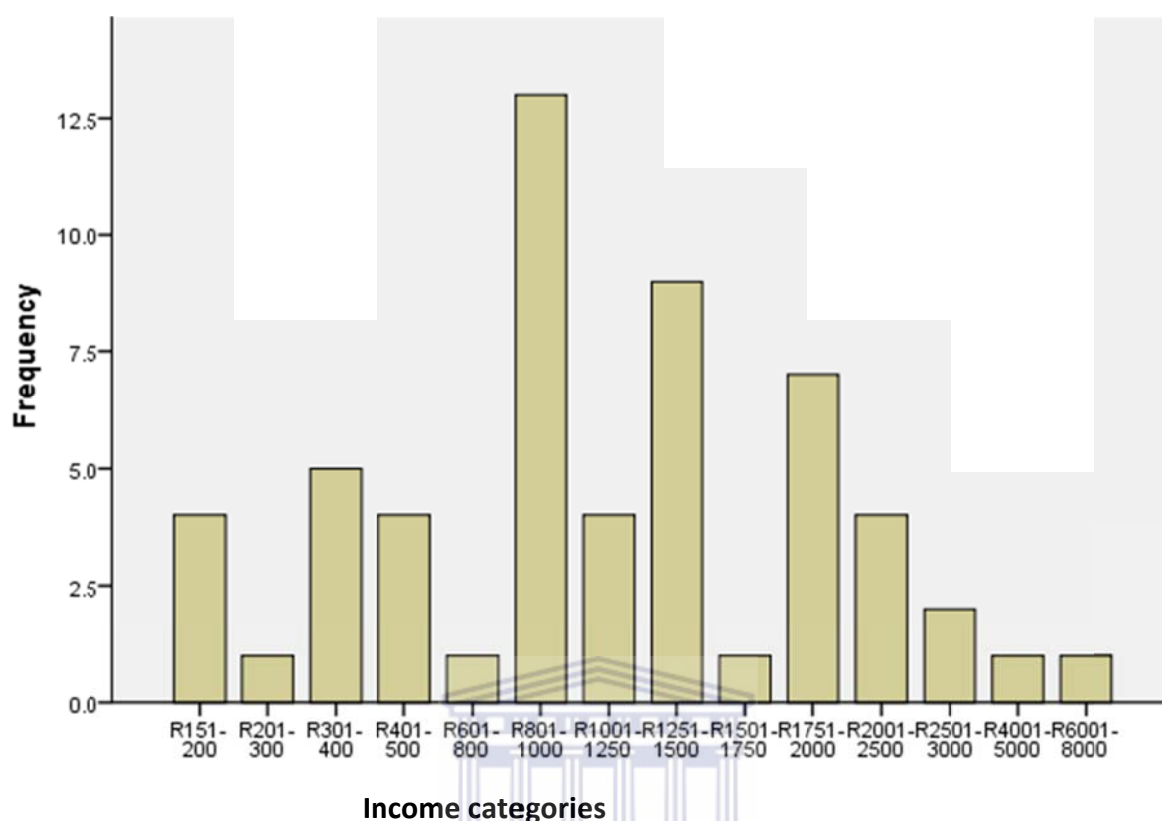
The finding on the number of days which the household did not have enough to eat in the previous month is therefore understandable. 70% of the sample did not have enough to eat for 1 – 7 days, while an additional 8% were short of food for between 8 and 14 days and 7% more for between 15 and 21 days. 2% more did not have enough to eat for 28 or 29 days. Only 13% of the respondents therefore had enough to eat at all times. This was borne out by what the women said informally.

7. 1.2.4 Capabilities in 2006: education and health.
If we consider education and health provision as some of the central capabilities which citizens could potentially receive from a just government[129] (Spence and Deneulin, 2009), it would be important to know what the women had access to in this regard in 2006. The findings on *education* show that only 8% of the respondents have low or no education, in other words mainly primary school education. A rather surprising 59% have grade 11 and above, and if we assume that those who have grade 11 attempted but failed grade 12,[130] it means that almost 60% of the women in this group at least attempted the final school examination. 25.5% eventually passed grade 12, and 3% have a post-school qualification.

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[129] Creating the conditions for the provision of housing could also be seen as the responsibility of a just government, but it is rather discussed as under assets here.
[130] A school-leaving certificate is issued after grade 12 or matric, whilst grade 11 is not a formal qualification.

This also shows that for many of these women, the education system failed them at the level of grade 11 or 12, when they were about 17 or 18. The reasonably high education levels suggest that this self-selected group might be more ambitious than others in this informal settlement.

The women had very good (self-reported) *health* on the whole, in spite of their relatively poor nutritional status, possibly because of the large number of young women in the survey population. Only 6% assessed their own health as poor, and 14% as fair. One fifth of the women therefore saw themselves as having health problems. Of these 6% had high blood pressure and three women had respiratory problems. This is often a problem in the township, as many people use wood or coals for heating in the winter and this leads to high levels of air pollution. One of our participants died in the course of our involvement as a result of respiratory problems. Two of the women in our group reported that they were HIV positive. HIV is likely to be under-reported in our sample, as the women who died of the disease since then did not report having it. The HIV infection rate for the 15-49 year old age group in South Africa was 16.2% in 2005, and was 3.2% in the Western Cape. It was however 15.5% in the Eastern Cape in the same year, and so could have been higher in Khayelitsha than the 3.2% for the Western Cape (Shisana *et al*, 2009). Four women died during the action phase of the programme. Two definitely died of AIDS, in one case complicated by TB, and a third reportedly had died of a stroke, although she was young and looked healthy. A fourth, as mentioned above, probably died of an asthma attack. Three more members are HIV positive and continue to live openly with the disease. They all receive medication and support from the local clinic in Site C. One other woman said that she had a sexually transmitted disease.

7. 1.2.5 Marital status:

An interesting finding deals with the marital status of the women. Sixty-two percent were never married, although some of the younger women might of course still have married. Twenty-six percent were married, and only 4% said that they lived with their partner. Only 5% are divorced or separated, which suggests that most women will rather remain unmarried, and have occasional partners, than to marry and divorce.[131] The category "never married" is probably disproportionately high among the women due to the nature of the action research programme and because of the high number of young women who might still marry.[132] It nevertheless raises the question whether this is a general trend. Seekings (2008) maintains that the decline of marriage is a general trend in South Africa. Spiegel, Watson and Wilkinson (1996) did some of the earliest studies in which this trend was identified, together with the general fluidity of household patterns. It is not clear whether the trend not to get married is associated with HIV and AIDS, with patterns of household violence, with the expectation that a married woman should take care of a house (and a man) and do the domestic work, with the cost of *lobola* or bridewealth, or in fact with any other factors.

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[131] We did not ask whether their marriage was entered into under customary or western law.
[132] There was however a category "too young", so if a respondent felt she would still marry she could have given that response.

7. 1.2.6 Women who discontinued after the survey

Fifty-three of the 103 women who completed the survey decided not to attend the life skills course. We did not contact them to find out why, as the notion of voluntary participation is a key construct of the project. It is however possible to present a profile of who the drop-outs are. They were mostly the younger women in the group, and the average age of this group was 27 years, while the most frequent age was 23 years. As with the rest of the group, their most significant plans for next years of their lives consisted mostly of getting employment, studying or owning a business or a house. The key aspect that they wanted to change seems to have been the need to source employment and/or money. As their needs are similar to those who stayed,[133] one has to assume that they did not want to take the long route of attending a life-skills course first.

7. 1.2.7 Social support

In response to a question whether they have access to somebody who will listen to them when they need it, only three women had a negative response, saying that they only had access to support infrequently. All the others had emotional support some of the time or always. This indicates an important level of social support or social capital, also found in other studies with the poor in South Africa (Carter and May, 2001; Du Toit and Neves, 2009a).

7. 1.2.8 Discussion

In view of the fact that the 103 women in our group are self-selected, it is important to consider what their profile is and in which ways they might not be representative of their community. It seems that the volunteers who participated in the programme are women who had aspirations even before the research started. A reasonably high fifty-nine present of them passed grade 11 and above, in an area where some women are still illiterate, which indicates that these women are ambitious and therefore almost certainly not representative of their community. All of them had migrated from the Eastern Cape to improve their situation, and all of them volunteered for the aspirations programme.

Except for the 19-29 year-old age group, there are only four women without children, although only 30% were married or lived with a partner in 2006. The majority of the group therefore had children but were single. They were largely unemployed, and were very keen to improve their standard of living. This seems to have been the main reason for their desire to participate in the programme.

In addition, a number of interesting themes emerge from the survey data on the younger group. For the 19 – 29 year old group the picture that emerges is that 49 or 70% of this group was single, about half of them had young children, and 43 of their children received child support grants. A small number of their children were not cared for in the household in which they lived. Seventy percent of this group also passed at least grade 11, while 30% achieved

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[133] See p. 167.

grade 10 or less. Many of them are therefore achievers who want to earn a living, but were unable to do so.

The second process which will be reported on is the aspiration surveys which were conducted between 2005 and 2010.

7.2. Aspirations Surveys

The respondents were asked what their aspirations were on five different occasions. The first survey was done in November 2005 when we had our first community meetings together with SANCO in Site C to recruit volunteers and to introduce the programme. We then asked all the women present to complete a form with identifying details and with a space to say what their aspirations were. Although 180 forms were completed, only a few brief responses to the question on aspirations were recorded – 29 wanted an income and four wanted to help others. The women filled these forms in after attending the meetings, and were not individually prompted to fill in all sections.

The second and main aspirations survey was undertaken in February and March 2006 when we used the set of questions contained in Appendix 1. This survey was recorded individually and verbatim with each woman who participated, in other words with 103 women. The questions were carefully formulated to give the respondent the opportunity to explore her own thinking, by repeating some of the questions in different ways. The third opportunity for expressing an aspiration arose when we reached the end of the life-skills course, and the women chose to do collective and cooperative work. The fourth session took place when they were already working on their aspirations in November 2007. The fifth and last time was during the 2010 interviews. The different aspirations expressed by the participating women are summarised in table 5.

The most important of these sessions were the 2006 interviews, and then the collective decision making during the course, which also determined the action which was taken.

Table 6: Aspirations expressed in 2006 and in 2010

No	Name	Survey aspiration, February 2006	Aspiration 2010 survey/person's situation
1	Akhona	Wanted a job. Wanted to study, get money. Wanted a better life for her children and a tombstone for her sister. Wanted a traditional ceremony for her mother, who died. Wanted to open a pre-school, run a business.	Moved away
2	Asanda	Wanted a job. Wanted to study and pass matric. Wanted money. Wanted to support her family, not be dependent.	Moved away
3	Boniswa	Wanted money, a better house.	Wanted to make something creative to earn a living
4	Bongeka	Be a nurse. Have a house, a car, complete her education.	Died 2008
5	Bulelwa	Wanted a job, money, a house, to be out of poverty	-
6	Diyeketso	Wanted to do catering.	Worked at her new home, established a catering business.
7	Esther	Wanted to be a designer. Wanted money, a job, a house.	Acquired a job

8	Fezeka	Wanted to do sewing	Catering chairperson. Remained active till her death in March 2013
9	Francis	"A dream life is what you think. Know who you are, trust yourself, take time." She wanted a job, money, a home for her children. She wanted to be a fashion designer.	"I want my children to be successful, be able to stand on their own two feet, be independent. Have their own homes and succeed in what they do in their lives."
10	Hazel	Wanted a job, money, a B&B.	She wanted to be successful in her Bed and Breakfast and catering business.
11	Liziwe	To be a social worker	"I want to help myself. I want to know how to make things myself, without help. Then I'll help the others to be like me. I want to do sewing, every style."
12	Nomaliso	She wanted to start a foster home for Aids orphans. She wanted to study about foster care, business, fundraising for HIV/AIDS, counselling. Her aspiration was to learn and study.	"To achieve what I once wanted to achieve when I was in school – to be a doctor or a nurse, hence I did home based care. To succeed, not to struggle, be independent."
13	Nella	Money to complete her house	What I like the most is business. I also like sewing with a business component
14	Nocwaka	Wanted to be a police woman, have an income, build a house for her disabled mother in the Eastern Cape	Left the group

15	Thandi	Wanted a job, a house in Eastern Cape, an income. Wanted her own money, her own house. Money to satisfy all her needs.	Living in the Eastern Cape
16	Nokuthula	Wanted to do sewing, have a business, get a job.	
17	Noma	Wanted employment, money, so that she can be a busy person. Wanted a job, a house, a car. Wanted to go to school/work.	"I want my own house, and a car."
18	Nomfundo	She wanted her own house in the Eastern Cape. She needed money.	
19	Ntombi-zodwa	She wanted a job in child care or in an old age home, or a business. She has a spaza shop (small house shop), but not enough money. She needs employment.	She likes helping people. At school, she used to dream about being a nurse. That is the reason she chose home based care.
20	Nomvuzo	She wanted her own hair salon. She wanted to work, have her own house, money, and car. She wanted to live in the suburbs. She needed financial support to achieve her aspirations.	
21	Nomzamo	She wanted a telephone container, money, a house and a car. She wanted to build a house in the Eastern	

		Cape. She wanted to be a respected and successful businesswoman. Maybe there would then be a wedding ceremony.	
22	Noxolo	She wanted to go to university, become a social worker. To be independent, extend her house, support her children and others. "I myself have not reached my goal; I live in hope." She also wanted to familiarise herself with information technology, own a business, be a designer. "I sacrificed my education, used the money for the children's education"	"That my children have a better life unlike me, because my parents did not have much, for them to get educated. Also help people. Want to be a community/social worker
23	Nosiphiwo	She wanted a job, a house, a car, work and money.	
24	Nosisi	To earn an income	She wanted to have a business
25	Nomsa	She wanted a sewing business. She had a small group, people stole the money.	
26	Nozuko	She wanted to be able to look after her family. She wanted her children to become "somebodies", learn from her mistakes. She wanted to fix up her house, have a healthy lifestyle, educate her children. So she wanted a house, job, a budget, some money.	She wanted a catering business, which was not moving because of a lack of cash.

27	Ntombentsha	She wanted a business, a job, no poverty	
28	Ntombothand o	She wanted money and work, and her own business. She wanted a hair salon, and a clothing shop.	
29	Patricia	She wanted to have a B & B, renovate her house to a double storey. She wanted to have a successful baking business, buy a van. She wanted to share her wealth – take in homeless children. She is also a traditional healer.	She wanted to develop the B&B into a successful business. She also wanted to feed those without food.
30	Sindiswa	She wanted money, a business, a car, a hair salon.	
31	Sindi	She wanted money, a dream house, her children's education, a car, her own education. She wanted to be a fashion designer	
32	Sizeka	She wanted a job, money, her own business. She wanted a new house for her mother, and she wanted to leave Khayelitsha.	
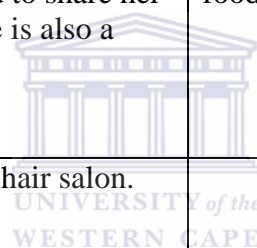
33	Thozama	She wanted to be employed, and to live in a better place. She wanted money, a business, and to work for herself. She wanted to build a home in the Eastern Cape, be able to support her family, have a child, set up a salon.	
34	Thando	She wanted to be a professional, well known hair dresser. She wanted to own property. She wanted a relationship with a man, but not be reliant on him.	
35	Thelma		Lives in Eastern Cape
36	Thembakazi	She wanted a proper house and employment, as well as money.	
37	Themba	She wanted a job, her own house, nice things.	
38	Thembela	She wanted a hair salon, to be independent, and also training in sewing.	
39	Vida	She wanted higher education. She wanted her family to have a good life. She wanted to work for the community, and assist the sick and the youth. She also wanted a luxury house.	"My main dream is a just society. That is the alleviation of poverty, less poverty."

40	Vuyiseka	She wanted money and employment	
41	Vuyiswa	She wanted a job and money.	
42	Zandile	Her aspiration was for a house – the shacks are very cold. She also wanted a sewing business.	Died 2008
43	Xola	She wanted to own a business and go back to school if there was money.	She wanted to help people. Especially the sick, elderly and frail people who are unable to go to attend clinics
44	Xoliswa	She wanted her own business. "To be able to have what I want and not to be a rich person." She wanted a hair salon and money. "To do things in my own way"	
45	Yonela	She wanted a job, her own place, "and everything I need."	

7.2.1 Main themes in 2006 aspiration survey

The 2006 survey includes an aspirations survey which contains the data against which the women's achievements can be assessed.[134] The aspirations of 45 of the women who continued with the next phase are recorded in table 6. Forty of the 45 specifically said that they wanted to have money for their needs, and wanted a business or a job in order to be able to obtain money.

When the data for the 25 women who stayed in the project until 2010 is reviewed,[135] 23 out of the 25 had said in 2006 that as a first priority they wanted an *income or a job of some kind*, confirming that the need for an income had been the motivation which brought them into the project and which motivated them to persevere. Eight of them wanted to do sewing, three catering, and seven care work. Out of the seven who wanted to do care work, three specifically wanted to train as a nurse. Two more, Vida and Nomaliso, wanted to "help people". Nosisi, in an earlier round of expressing her aspirations, wanted to be a famous actor, and did not want to live in Site C, but later expressed the need for an income. Thozama wanted a hair salon, while Nomsa wanted to transfer her really excellent sewing skills to a group she could work with. She had previously worked with a group, but they stole the project's money, and she was looking for a new group which could benefit from her skills. If one takes into consideration that the seven women who wanted to do care work, either as home based carers or by fostering orphans for payment, probably wanted to do that as something which they would enjoy doing but which could simultaneously provide an income, it would mean that everybody except three women, Vida, Nomsa, and Nosisi, had expressed the need for an income as their main aspiration in 2006.[136] That five women also wanted to improve their own education might be a confirmation of this finding. Four mentioned the improvement of their house, or a new house as a further aspiration.

They therefore saw their aspirations as being primarily *constrained by their economic position,* and by their need for a sustainable, regular income, as is evidenced by the aspirations they chose to work on. They were living at a very basic level and wanted to improve this. A better income was however not the only consideration, as becomes clear when the individual aspirations are examined. A number of the women voiced quite ambitious aspirations. This could be the outcome of a period of expanding opportunities in South Africa, with political change, political promises, cultural change such as more gender equity, and the experience of "a moment of possibility" as a result of South Africa's recent history (Dickow and Møller, 2002; Steyn *et al*, 2010).

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[134] The questions contained in this survey can be found in Appendix 1, as discussed in chapter six.

[135] This group of 25 was part of the 45 listed in table 6, but this analysis allows us to focus in on the group which remained active throughout.

[136] All three of them also expressed the need for an income at different times though.

7.2.2 Individual aspirations

The migration histories of the six women whose stories will be used as case studies were already briefly discussed in chapters one and two. I shall now give extracts from the aspirations which six of them expressed during the main aspiration interview in 2006.

Nella, who turned out to be one of the most successful of the women, and who leads the still-active sewing group, said that all she wanted was money to achieve her dreams. Her ideals were to pay for her children's education, and to renovate her house. "*It will be a good life for me when I am not struggling to survive.*" She has sewing skills, a love for doing business, and quiet perseverance.

Nomaliso, who was very active in *Someleze* throughout as the chairperson of the home based care group, wanted to start her own business and start a foster home for orphans. For this propose she wanted training in working with children, in business skills and fundraising, and in counselling. When we interviewed her a year later with the purpose of assisting her specifically with these goals within the home-based care group, she did not want to work on them at all. When asked about her strengths, she summarised them quite well when she said "*I am a good communicator. I tried to do counselling…I have good people skills, and am a good negotiator and mediator.*" She also understood her own weaknesses well: "*I sleep a lot, am a later-comer and am slow to get ready for events.*" This is probably because she has been HIV positive for ten years and has to take good care of her body. The result has however been that she has never pushed her-self, and her progress has been very slow, despite her talents and potential. The aspiration she voiced in 2010 was probably her true ideal: "*to achieve what I wanted to be at school- a doctor or nurse. To not struggle with poverty, be independent*" (see table 6). Her life history and constraints will be further explored in the analysis.

Noxolo is a mother of four with the ambition to rise above her circumstances of poverty and deprivation. She wanted to have a "normal" life – she has been disabled since the age of two due to polio – to prove that she could be like anybody else. She wanted to go to university, become a social worker, and then to have a job, a car, a house, and to live an independent life. She also wanted to help others and assist them to achieve similar goals. "*I have no fears, but if I have one it is that my dream will not come true, and that I will not be able to council people.*"

Nozuko reflected on the physical abuse they suffered as children, which they saw as normal. She now understands "it wasn't right." She wanted a successful business so that she would have the money to educate her children so that they could become "somebodies" in future. She wanted them to learn from her mistakes, especially from her teenage pregnancy which caused her to drop out of school. She failed in everything so far, which she attributed to not having money, which is required for everything. She also said in one interview that her life with an abusive, alcoholic husband constrained what she could do.

Francis, who was the chairperson of *Someleze* for a number of years, wanted to be a fashion designer in order to be able to provide for her children. "*Your dream life is what you think. You must know who you are, trust in yourself, you must know everything is going to take time.*" Her main aim was to give her children a bright future. With this in mind she wanted a job. She could sew and do bead-working; she could work with these skills.

Vida said the following: "*What I want is to achieve in life is to have the highest education, and my family must have a good life. I would like to assist those who are sick in my community and do workshops with them. I want to concentrate on the youth.*" When she manages to do that, "*there will be a change in my life because I will manage to do what is in my heart.*" She knew that her strength is to interact with people, and networking with different people makes her happy.

This round also included a rich variety of other aspirations, such as paying for traditional ceremonies for others, making a tombstone, having and driving a car, being a famous actor, and not living in Site C. The aspiration to have a reasonable income so as to be able to afford life's necessities was however the dominant theme. Xola said the following: "*I've managed to complete my standard ten[137] but what didn't work is that I cannot find a job so that I can take care of my mother*" (Xola, 10.05.06).

The ways in which the women pursued these aspirations will be tracked in the analysis. Although there were many common themes, each woman's journey was an individual experience with its own successes and problems.

7.2.3 Changes in aspirations between 2006 and 2010

How did the women's aspirations change over the four year period? In comparison to their initial aspiration for livelihoods, six of them prioritised in 2010 that they wanted to be able to be *independent*. Boniswa, Francis, Noxolo, Liziwe, Nomaliso and Thozama all emphasised that they wanted to be independent and wanted an independent way of earning an income. Francis and Noxolo also said that they would like to be able to ensure that their children would be able to be financially independent. This is in line with the research on the primacy of the need for autonomy which was reviewed in chapter five. Of these women, Boniswa, Francis and Liziwe were successful in doing and marketing their sewing. Noxolo and Nomaliso were both active in the *Someleze* care group, where they supported needy people in Site C, but never succeeded in building this into an independent and well-functioning NPO, despite much encouragement from me. [138] Noxolo also made other efforts to become independent, as will be discussed in the agency section. Thozama seemed unsuccessful in all

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[137] Grade 12.

[138] NPO: Not for profit organisation, which has to be registered with the Department of Social Development. I said that I would help to fundraise for their NPO if they could establish a well-run service. I fundraised for a volunteer-rate for them while they attempted this, and three women received the volunteer wage for three years, but they were not able to take initiative to build the NPO into a sustainable unit.

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her efforts, probably due to being HIV positive and contracting severe TB, so that she was hospitalised for a long period.

In 2010 six of the women had as a main aspiration that their business would be *successful, or more successful.* Two of them, Hazel and Patricia, had worked very hard to establish a "bed and breakfast" in their homes, but it had not taken off. Nella had established a well-working sewing concern in two rooms of the Someleze container centre, with about eight new women participating, and Fezeka, who had received a stove on behalf of the catering group, ran a successful catering business from her home. Nozuko, who had also received a stove, had not managed to start a business, and had not even used the stove during that period. Nosisi had likewise not been successful in getting a business off the ground.

Six of the women surveyed in 2010 preferred to have a *formal job*, with a regular income. Esihle left the project to look for such a job, while Ntombizodwa obtained a job as health visitor for an NGO through Someleze. She was very happy and fulfilled in this job. Nomsa had left the project because of conflict. Her skills level was much higher than those of the other women, but they refused to take advice from her, and she became frustrated. When she was offered formal employment in the textile sector she accepted it. Esther also left the project due to conflict, and took formal employment as a domestic worker. She later suffered a stroke and did sewing from home. Noma took a job as security guard in a shopping centre, where she had to work for long and irregular hours under difficult conditions. When we interviewed her in 2010 she was unhappy with the work and looking for something else. She was living by herself in a small shack in a dangerous area in Philippi, with a high crime rate. Her aspiration was still for a house and a car for herself, and to be able to care for her mother and her child in the rural area. Noxolo had been very active in the *Someleze* care group, but left in order to find a formal job. She succeeded a number of times, as will be related in the agency section, but her employment was not permanent and sustainable.

Nomsa, who has very good sewing skills, was therefore the only person in the group who was able to get good, permanent salaried employment which she was satisfied with. Ntombizodwa had been very happy with her job but the global financial crisis impacted negatively on the NGO sector, and the organisation in which she worked in 2010 retrenched all their workers soon after. Two of the women, Thandi and Thembeka, relocated their successful sewing micro-businesses to the Eastern Cape.

The aspirations of the women who wanted to *help others*, largely remained the same as in 2006. Noxolo still wanted to be a social worker, and Nomaliso, Phumla and Sindiswa still wanted to become a nurse. Vida and Xola still wanted to care for people, but Vida, who had since built up a highly successful care organisation, said her aspiration had changed to *"working for a just society."*

In the 2010 survey we also asked the women how they thought their aspirations had changed since we started. Most of them said that they were able to *add to their aspirations* because they now had more knowledge and were more resourceful. Hazel said she was able to actually

do things towards realising her dream of having a bed and breakfast facility. Francis thought she had not changed her aspirations but added things, which had become possible because she had achieved some skills and now also had a brick house. Nella was excited about the way their sewing business was growing, and about the fact that they now had electricity.

Vida's response was:

"*Yes, there are differences. In 2006 I had a vision of caring for orphans and having a place of safety in my home. By now I've figured out that it is about institutional capacity building, training, skills development. I have not yet started with that. Now my dream is to help people with skills development training, then to get jobs, or to create jobs for themselves.*" (Vida, 21.05.10).

On the whole the aspirations of the women had become more focussed and more specific by 2010, building on those functionings which had been achieved in the interim period. For those who had established something, their aspiration was now to make it more successful, to gain more independence from it, or to deepen the level at which they worked. Their need for autonomy had also become established during this period.

7.3 Summary

In this chapter the outcomes of two main research processes were given. These were the household survey, which acted as a benchmark of the situation of the women at the beginning of the research, and the different articulations of their aspirations. These different sets of outcomes will contribute towards the analysis of the findings in chapters eight and nine.
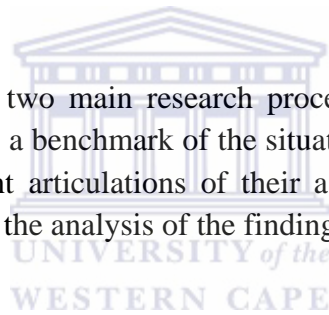
Chapter 8
Interpretation and analysis of the women's efforts to realise their aspirations

The purpose in analysing and interpreting the research material in this chapter is two-fold. The first object is to provide a theoretical framework for the assessment of whether actions taken to realise aspirations can increase capabilities. Secondly I shall use this framework to assess whether deliberate efforts to realise their aspirations had in fact increased the functionings and capabilities of twenty five of the participating women. In this assessment, and in that which will be done in chapter nine, I shall apply a narrative mode of analysis within Sen's capability approach (Robeyns, 2005a:193).

The research question for this research is: Can deliberate attempts to realise their aspirations, with limited support from others, increase the capabilities of the poor? One would assume that middle-class women with sufficient resources in a country with constitutionally guaranteed rights would be able to use their aspirations to achieve "a good life" - whatever they might mean by this - unless there were particular factors such as gender discrimination or habituation which prevented them from doing so. In this study the qualifying clause is therefore "the poor." Appadurai (2004) raised the possibility that aspirations might be a vehicle to relieve poverty, and this research investigates that possibility. Realising one's aspirations is however not something which can happen in social isolation, and the social conditions and constraints faced by the women will be integrated into the capability analysis. In the context of these structural constraints, one has to ask what role agency can play to facilitate people's rise out of poverty. This question will guide the agency analysis, which will be briefly touched on in this chapter and will then be addressed in the next. Having reviewed the aspirations of the respondents in chapter seven, and the way in which it changed over time, I shall now deal with the discussion and assessment of the increase in functionings and capabilities of twenty five women.

8.1 Did efforts to realise their aspirations increase the women's functionings and capabilities?

8.1.1 Background

In order to be able to discuss this question I shall first introduce a diagram which I adapted from Robeyns (2005:98). Her "stylised non-dynamic representation of a person's capability set and social context"[139] shows visually that capabilities stand in the centre of the situation which is to be assessed, while the end or goal of the interaction is the choice which leads to the person's achieved functionings. At the other end of the diagram one finds the capability inputs or the means to achieve, as well as the social context. This diagram has been used (and adapted) extensively by scholars using the capability approach (Khodzarova, 2012; Ooserlaken, 2008; Zheng, 2007), which indicates that it captures the essence of the approach in the perception of many.

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[139] See Robeyns' original diagram on p. 72.

Diagram 6: Social context, aspirations and capability set of *Someleze* women (adapted from Robeyns, 2005:98)

Means & constraints; power relations in social context:

-Historical context
-Laws and policies
-Social institutions
-Social and cultural norms
-Groups of different kinds
-Environmental factors etc.

Resources: social, economic, political, goods & services

Someleze: some resources

Conversion Factors:
-Individual
-Social
-Environmental

Agency

Aspiration formulation

Adaptation

Judgement

Choice

Capability set or opportunity structure

Personal history, profile, psychology Identity: Race, class, gender, culture

Achieved functionings Key outcomes

Action
-Reflective judgement
-Motivation
-Pursuit of goals
-Autonomy
-Relatedness
-Competence

Increased capabilities / lack of increase in capabilities

New aspirations

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The adapted diagram will first be explained, and then I shall give an indication of how it will be used here.[140] This diagram will be the main theoretical contribution of the dissertation.

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[140] A larger version of diagram 6 is available at the end of the dissertation in a fold-out format.

Robeyns' original diagram was created to explain the relationship between different conceptual elements in a person's capability set and in her social and personal context. If one studies the original diagram devised by Robeyns on p.72 of this dissertation, one notices that the main structure is largely retained in the adaptation. The social context exerts influence over the capability set, and over preference formation – in the adapted version over aspiration formation. The person's personal history and psychology, together with social influences, impact on the making of choice. Choices can lead to achieved functionings. In the centre of the representation is the capability set, which enables or constrains the functionings.

The changes I made deal largely with the introduction of agency and action, adaptation, and with the way in which achieved functionings can lead to increased capabilities and new aspiration formation. Other changes concern the position of the *means to achieve.* Whereas Robeyns has named production, income and transfers as capability inputs in her diagram, I removed that block as I did not study the ways in which production led to capabilities, but rather how action led to functionings. I therefore simplified the section on *means* to only include those elements on which I focussed in my research. For the same reason I added constraints, the historical context, resources and power, as I shall explain below.

The adapted diagram which I introduce here has a different purpose from the original. It does not serve a universal purpose, but was designed or adapted to illustrate a specific application of the capability approach, namely to assess whether the actions taken by the *Someleze* women to achieve their aspirations increased their capabilities. I shall now explain the relationship the different elements in diagram 6 have to one another. Firstly there are means and constraints in the social context which can enable or constrain opportunities. A range of social factors are listed in the first box, and the second box contains the social, economic and political resources associated with such social structures. All of these are subject to power relations and to the abuse of power, particularly the resources. The arrow therefore leads from social structures to resources, indicating the possible influence of power. I then also introduce the organisation *Someleze*, which offered the women a particular set of resources, in addition to those which exist in their context. Power relations also play a role in such smaller organisations, of course. All these social structures provide the means which people can use for the formation of aspirations. In the course of converting the means into functionings conversion factors come into play. The social context, different resources, and conversion factors all contribute to a person's particular capability set.

When aspiration formulation takes place, it is directly influenced by the capability set, and also by the capacity to act, or agency. Without a reasonably accessible capability set and agency, aspiration formulation is unlikely to take place. I then propose that there are two processes that lead to action, namely a process of judgement, and of choice. The deliberation of aspirations is influenced by one's personal history and psychology, as well as by social identity issues such as race, class, gender and culture. The choice which is taken is put into action, and I propose that action can be assessed by means of six dimensions, namely reflective judgement, motivation, pursuit of goals, autonomy, relatedness and competence. Such action leads to achieved functionings, which enable the researcher to assess whether

capabilities increased. New capabilities can in turn lead to new aspiration formation. It is important to emphasise that these actions are not discrete steps which necessarily follow a given order in real life, and that the sequence is conceptual rather than functional.

The design of diagram 6 has been influenced by the conceptualisation of agency in chapter five, and also by Holten's arguments on "The act of choice" (Holten, 2006). He suggests a frame where choice would be preceded by deliberation (or considering the options); judging (or deciding *that*); choosing (or deciding *to*), and acting (using agency to act on the intention that was made). He observes that this scheme is however flawed, as judging is often dropped or compromised[141] (Holten, 2006:11). If we accept his reasoning, deliberation and judgment are required before choice is exercised, and can therefore be shown as being connected with choice. *Taking action* would follow on choice. This means that deliberation and judgment lead to choice, which again leads to action. One then needs to ask what can be adapted. I argue that aspirations, choice and/or action can be adapted, and therefore the adaptation arrow points in three possible directions. Only one element, or more than one of these elements could be adapted.

In this chapter I shall use the diagram to assess whether the women's actions on their aspirations had increased their capabilities. The headings in the chapter will follow the design of the digram closely. Most of the responses to these issues and questions come from the survey undertaken in 2010 to investigate whether the efforts of the women since 2006 to realise their aspirations had increased their functionings. The survey questions are given in Appendix 4. These interviews were conducted with 19 of the women we were still in regular contact with. Six others who had been a central part of the group and whose circumstances were known to us but who were unable to be interviewed were added to the list. These are the last six names on the list,[142] from Fezeka to Esther. For the analysis in this chapter information will be added from the benchmark household survey undertaken in 2006, and from other interviews and focus group discussions, as will be indicated.[143] To indicate how different constraints, conversion factors and forms of adaptation can work together to limit the women in the achievement of their aspirations, these factors will be discussed in an integrated section at the end of the chapter.

The assessment of the capabilities of the respondents will start with the discussion of their social context.

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[141] Holton's conclusion that judgement is often dropped supports my proposal in chapter five that the definition of agency should not only be associated with reflective choice.

[142] See the list in table 7 on p.199.

[143] Some of this analysis was published in Conradie (2013). The discussion has been considerably extended in this version.

8.1.2 The social context: means and constraints
8.1.2.1 History and migration.
The twenty five women who were assessed in 2010 were all born in the rural Eastern Cape, and have close and on-going contact with family members and communities in the rural areas where they come from. In this way they have been shaped by the cultural norms which these communities hold, and which gradually change with exposure to other values as different ideas emerge about "the good life" (Appadurai, 2004:67; Douglas, 2004).

They had all migrated to Cape Town and all of them needed to amplify the material livelihoods and resources of their households. This had been the greatest motivation for their relocation. In different ways they have all been affected by the historical background recounted in chapter two. Their pride in being Xhosa is evident from their responses. This has however been eroded by deliberate and vicious policies aimed at turning them into a class of manual labourers, with little and inferior education, during colonial times and especially during the apartheid period (Carter and May, 2001:1988). They put all they had into the struggle for the right to stay and work in Cape Town, and some died in the course of this process. Like other disempowered South Africans they thought that democracy would reverse their position, only to be further frustrated by the lack of formal employment opportunities (Thompson and Conradie, 2010; Thompson, Conradie and Tsolekile, forthcoming).

8.1.2.2 Employment and income.
A key question in relation to income is whether the households represented by the participating women fall above or below the so-called "Micawber threshold". This term has been created to express the notion of "types and depths of poverty…which not even a forward looking willingness to sacrifice and save can eradicate" (Carter and May, 1999:7) and is based on David Micawber's story in *David Copperfield* by Dickens. Some of the key factors to be taken into consideration in this regard will be the asset base of the respondents at the start of the project, any entitlements which could change that in the foreseeable future, the potential influence of positive and negative shocks, and whether agency, as that shown by David Micawber, can play a role in assisting them towards upward mobility. This line represents a crucial distinction, as Carter and May (2001:1991) argue that the group above the Micawber line would be likely to move upward in time, while the group below would not be likely to do so, but can be expected to be chronically reproduced as a poverty class.

I shall first look at the reported household incomes for the 2006 survey group as a whole, and then at the information which is available on assets, entitlements, and shocks. I shall also briefly look at agency in the context of this discussion.

When the project started in 2006, seven of the 25 women lived in households where there was no formal and regular income apart from government grants. In twelve households there was at least one breadwinner with regular or occasional work, but average incomes were

nevertheless low.[144] Two husbands were plumbers and two were contractors, but the women either did not know or did not say what they earned. For the rest there was no information. Only 21.6% of the 103 women who participated in the survey in 2006 had themselves worked for some time in the fortnight before the survey was done. The mean reported household income of R315 per person per month, including grants, was therefore below the poverty line of R431 per person in 2006 prices, but as was already stated in chapter seven, their income figure is not reliable. There was however observable poverty in most homes. A small number of them probably would not see themselves as poor in comparison to others, although there had been times when they all struggled financially.

With regard to *assets*, a house is an important asset in this kind of context, which influences one's health, particularly in an area with high TB rates, one's safety and one's mental state, and can be used as a space to work from or to use as an asset in other ways, such as renting out rooms. Seven of the women lived in small brick houses when the project began, two of which had been built by the women themselves, Nella and Patricia, under the auspices of the Homeless People's Federation. The rest all lived in shacks or temporary houses built from corrugated iron and wood. When the project ended in 2012 six more households had moved to government-provided brick houses, where one of the great advantages was to have an indoor flash toilet. Going out to a toilet at night increases safety risks in this high-crime area, and this is therefore a major factor. A total of 13 out of the 25 families now have brick houses in Site C, while eight families still live in shacks.[145] Two of them, Boniswa and Nozuko, expect to be re-housed soon. For those who received brick houses from government, this *positive asset shock* has improved their asset base, as well as their motivation to improve their lives.[146]

Their *entitlements* consist mostly of their government grants, as well as the expectation to get a house, if they do not have one yet. The data for grants is taken from the 2006 survey, where 103 women were interviewed. Seventy-one percent of the women reported that they get child support grants, and 66% reported that their children receive grants. The difference could be in the case where women send their children to the Eastern Cape to be cared for by a grandmother, but keep the grant for themselves to facilitate the process of getting employment to assist in the support of the Eastern Cape household. Two women in the group, Boniswa, who was in a bus accident, and Noxolo, who had polio as a child, also get disability grants.

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[144] The mean income per family was R1704 and the mean number of people per household 5.4 (see p. 155.) This however included all 103 households that were surveyed, so does not give specific incomes for these 25 households.

[145] Two of the deceased women's households are not included, and two had relocated to the Eastern Cape.

[146] Many of the households are known to also have houses in the Eastern Cape, but as that question was never formally asked, exact numbers are not known. These would be likely to be either brick houses or traditional clay houses.

Six of the actively involved women left the project between 2008 and 2010 to look for formal jobs[147], and only one of them secured good, safe and reliable employment. Employment is therefore not an entitlement which the women hold, which can also be related back to broader structural problems in the South African economy (Carter and May, 1999, 2001; Gelb, 2004). These problems with accessing reliable employment can be seen as *negative shocks* (Davies, 1996) where resilience and sensitivity may play a role. As the households had not come to rely on employment, they were probably reasonably resilient, but some households would be sensitive to the loss of employment, especially when their living standard had been upwardly adjusted, as in the case of Ntombi.

Another interesting aspect of the livelihood analysis of the women emerged in seven qualitative interviews done in 2012, to look at the urban-rural flow of resources. In two cases, money flowed in both directions within the family. Both Francis and Nomaliso send money to their rural family members and receive money from there. In Nomaliso's case this exchange with her mother's sister in the rural area is based on need, but in the case of Francis, her household has two definite sites, one in Cape Town and one in the Eastern Cape. At the time when *Someleze* started her husband became unemployed and moved to the Eastern Cape. She now sends him money from her income to plant potatoes, and also sends her sewing products and second hand clothes to sell there. He sends back a part of the income to sustain the Cape Town household. Boniswa said that in her case no money is sent to and fro. The other three women, Nella, Noxolo and Nozuko, all regularly send small amounts to family members in the Eastern Cape, and in Nella's case, also to family in Cape Town.

Although some of the above changes in the women's livelihoods occurred independently of the aspirations research, such as the improved housing, I took special care in the 2010 interviews to ask them which of the changes in their lives are related to the actions they took in pursuit of their aspirations. These are represented in column 4 and 5 of table 7 on page 199, under "key actions taken between 2006 and 2010 in relation to aspirations" and "key outcomes". In these interviews I therefore explored the pathways between the resolutions they took and the livelihood-related outcomes, in line with the initial resource objective to explore whether a focus on aspirations would increase livelihoods or not. [148] The tracing of pathways between outcomes and their causes was pioneered *i.a.* by Cleland and Van Ginneken (1988) and is a recognised research tool (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:469).

The question of whether agency can play a role in upward mobility is probably one where the findings of this study can be relevant, albeit in qualitative terms, as the numbers are very small and not entirely reliable, as was seen above. The actions which the women took, which will be reviewed below, and the difference which that succeeded in making to their livelihoods, will enable us to respond to this question.

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[147] This was of course a period of international recession.
[148] See point 8, page 130.

8.1.2.3 Policies and laws

Apartheid policies and laws were designed to limit opportunities for any citizens who were not white. Post-apartheid policies and laws however not only have the opposite intention, but have also often been designed in accordance with Rawls' second principle, that in cases of inequality the expectations of the least advantaged should be maximised (Rawls, 1999:68). Examples of such laws have been the redistributive provision of housing and social security to the least advantaged, as well as policies such as Black Economic Empowerment, which seek to advance people of colour in employment situations. The redistributive policies have been highly successful in addressing extreme poverty. For a range of reasons the policies of redress have not been radically transformative to all previously disadvantaged people. Although the women in the research said in a focus group in 2008 that they know they can now rely on the constitution to protect them, and that they would sue anybody who attempted to alienate them from that right, in reality the new laws have had some but limited impact. For those who have been able to obtain university qualifications and employment, the difference has been considerable. For most others, the socio-economic impact has been minimal. The change in personal freedom and dignity in the new South Africa is most important to the women, but they want that change to be accompanied by real economic opportunities.

8.1.2.4 Social institutions

One of the biggest problems of post-apartheid South Africa has been the failure of government departments to effectively and efficiently implement the new laws, as was indicated in chapter two (Terreblanche, 2012; Chipkin, 2012). This has also had an impact on local level governance and on the morale of both local government officials and on the citizenry (Thompson and Conradie, 2011b; Thompson, Conradie and Tsolekile, forthcoming). There are some government offices in Khayelitsha, but generally they have long queues, a slow response system, and create untold frustration. NGO's have struggled to survive the global economic crisis, and many have closed down, leaving ordinary citizens with limited recourse. The result has been a wave of one 'service protest' action on the other, not only in Khayelitsha but countrywide – a current feature of South African society. In general, social institutions are therefore only partly accessible to the citizens of Khayelitsha, and ordinary people are often left feeling disempowered in post-apartheid South Africa (Terreblanche, 2012).

The problems which people experience with education and health services can be included under institutional functioning, although I shall discuss both of these sets of services under conversion factors, for the reason that their impact on the *Someleze* women has been very direct and personal.

8.1.2.5 Social and cultural norms

Social and cultural norms in the area reflect a continuum of influences. These influences are not simply "traditional" or "western" but a creative new mixture which forms a distinct, vibrant and original "township" way of life (Bank, 2011; Taylor and Conradie, 1997). The ways in which the women were influenced by cultural norms, both traditional and in new

forms, will be discussed under personal history and identity. It is important to note that these influences are strong and enduring.

8.1.2.6 Groups

Social interaction is a vital part of township life, and all the women are linked to a number of social groups, of religious, political or personal nature. These groups can have an influence on their choices (Stewart, 2005). The influence of *Someleze* group processes and of other groups on individual women will be dealt with below. It is part of their lifestyle not only to be linked to formal groups, but to live in interaction with others to a greater extent than people do in middle-class suburbs in South Africa. Both formal and informal groups moreover assist when one is in trouble, financially or otherwise (Bank, 2011; Mosoetsa, 2011). Street committees, local police forums, SANCO community meetings and church structures are all valued and valuable structures in this context (Thompson and Conradie, 2011).

8.1.2.7 *Someleze*

The organisation which the women formed for the work associated with the research is important as a means to development, as I undertook to raise funds for their collective projects and for the equipment which they would individually need. I also arranged for good quality training for different activities, and for the donation and adaptation of two containers to form a small women's centre in Site C. These resources were helpful to some, but because of power relations in the group, not to everybody equally. Everybody benefitted equally from training and equipment, but not from the use of the centre, where Francis as chairperson took the lead. When the group challenged her, she withdrew, and Nella's project still uses the centre daily. My role as "white" resource person, by virtue of professional and other affiliations better connected to societal resources than they are, was a role with inherent power. I therefore attempted to give the group as much decision-making responsibility as possible, both to overcome the conventional South African pattern where "white" people have more power,[149] and to ensure that they felt a sense of ownership of their own projects.

The ways in which these different resources and means acted either as a facilitating force or as a constraint will be reviewed when the key outcomes of the women's activities had been discussed.

8.1.3 Conversion factors[150]

The next step in the discussion will be to consider which conversion factors impact on the ways in which the women were able to convert means into functionings.

Individual conversion factors which can be identified are mostly associated with health concerns and problems. Out of the 25 women a number had a reasonably serious health concern, often associated with being obese – the result of too much fast food and fatty meat,

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[149] This tendency is obviously no longer sanctioned, but can still form an underlying layer of influence in interactions (Terreblanche, 2002:443).

[150] Conversion factors were defined on p.46.

which is the cooked food which is on sale in the township. Patricia had a stroke in 2006, but is reasonably well recovered, and has lost some weight. Esther also had a stroke in 2008. Vida has a serious knee problem for which she had an operation in 2013 and she has to lose weight, and Francis has had a breast lump removed, also in 2013, at which time the doctor also warned her to lose weight. Boniswa and Noxolo both have physical disabilities of long standing, while Nozuko appears depressed at times. Nomaliso, Sindiswa and Thozama are known to be HIV positive, while Fezeka and Boniswa died of AIDS in the course of the project.

Education can also be seen as an individual conversion factor, as one's level of education can play an important role in how you are able to convert resources into functionings. Two of the women had seven or fewer years of schooling; one had eight years. Two had ten years of schooling, and seven had 11 years, which means that most of them probably attempted and failed matric. Six have matric, and one, Vida, has a BA degree. Three of the 25 women's educational status is not known to us. Closely linked to education is a person's ability to speak and write reasonably good English, the language of the world of business in South Africa. It is striking that the two women who are able to speak good English, Vida and Francis, also made the best progress with increasing their functionings. Noxolo and Nella were not able to make equally good progress, although their functionings had also increased. It might however be that the ability to speak and write reasonably good English is a core competency in this context.

Social conversion factors can cover a range of issues. Although we shall analyse identity issues such as race, class, gender and culture under *personal profile*, each of these factors could equally be a social conversion factor. It is in fact important not to personalise issues which are caused by societal dynamics, such as racism, and end up "blaming the victim" (Ryan, 1976). It is therefore vital to analyse racism, classism, gender discrimination and cultural insensitivity as factors which can constrain people in the pursuit of their goals, and thus as conversion factors. To the extent that these factors are internalised as personal perceptions, they can however also become part of a person, and influence her judgement and choice. They should therefore be taken into account in both slots on the diagram.

Environmental conversion factors concern mostly the unhealthy swamp-conditions where Khayelitsha was built. These cause severe floodings every winter, and wet and unhealthy conditions in people's houses, especially in shacks.

Conversion factors may act either in a facilitating or constraining way in the unlocking of agency. This will be considered in more detail in the agency analysis in chapter nine.

8.1.4 Aspirations: were they realistic?
Having reviewed which aspects should be discussed as elements in the social context, and which could be seen as possible conversion factors, I shall return to the aspirations the women voiced, and ask to what extent the initial aspirations were realistic and built on already existing capabilities. In assessing this, a number of factors must be taken into account. Ray's

aspirations gap (Ray, 2003:3) is "the difference between the standard of living that is aspired to and the standard of living that one already has." It thus postulates the difference between the skills and functionings one has, and those which are needed in order to achieve a given aspiration. According to Ray this difference should be big enough to motivate a person to want to make an effort to achieve the aspiration, but not so big that it seems impossible (Ray, 2003).

Conradie and Robeyns (2013) propose that one should look at the formulation of aspirations as a process which operates like a staircase, rather than like an elevator. I shall now expand on the ways in which this image can be used to understand how aspiration formation works. I would argue that the adoption of aspirations can be seen in two different ways. It could either be seen as a process which could be purposeful and focussed, based on a set of clear goals which are achievable as the aspirations gap consists of steps to which the person has already had some relevant exposure. Aspiration formation could otherwise be experimental, if the aspiration gap covers untraveled territory. If it is experimental, it could take time before the person knows exactly what the nature of her aspiration gap is, and what would be required to fill it. In this process she could move up and down the staircase, until she finds the level which is feasible and possible with her set of functionings, capabilities, resources and obstacles at that time. If she achieves new functionings, new capabilities open up and she is able to adjust her aspirations to a new level, changing her position on the staircase.

In all cases the aspirations voiced by the women in the project were those which they had not been able to achieve on their own, and for which they needed some resources and some assistance. They were therefore probably all to some extent experimental. Did they immediately target a realistic level?

Eight of the 25 women voiced aspirations which, in my assessment, turned out to be too ambitious at that stage, given their specific situation at that time (see Table 7, column 3). All eight managed to achieve some functionings which were either a step in the direction of their aspiration, or something simpler which nevertheless worked for them. Francis wanted to be a "fashion designer" but became a competent seamstress, although it is possible that she used this term without fully understanding how it is normally used. Hazel and Patricia both wanted to have a guesthouse for overseas tourists but turned instead to catering for the local community, as a stepping stone to the guesthouse. Both made considerable sacrifices to reach this goal, setting aside the best rooms in their homes and living in temporary accommodation outside the house. It however requires a special space to allow foreigners to feel comfortable and safe in your township home. In neither of these cases did this work, despite their own best efforts, and those of professional volunteers who attempted to assist them. They therefore focussed first on catering and selling food in the township to enable them to put money away to upgrade the guesthouse.

The other five all wanted to go to university, but attempted an income generating activity instead, or in one case (Noxolo) obtained a job in industry, which she lost again. The women are aware that others who had broken out of the poverty cycle had mostly done so by means

of a better education, and this was therefore also a strong aspiration for five of the women. It also seemed that they had aimed too high. Two wanted to do social work and three wanted to study nursing. All but one had finished the last year of school, but whereas some universities such as the University of the Western Cape attempted to take in as many previously disadvantaged students as possible in the post-1994 period, entrance qualifications have now been tightened considerably, and their school grades are unlikely to allow them university access. It therefore seems safe to conclude that going to university is not a very realistic aspiration for Nomaliso, who would have had to repeat grade 12, who is HIV positive with low energy levels and who has dependent children. It would probably also not have worked for Sindiswa either, who is also HIV positive and a single parent. Phumla applied for admission to the university in 2010 to study nursing, and as her husband is a taxi driver and could afford to assist her financially, she might have managed it. She however died soon after having made the application, reputedly of a stroke. Noxolo wanted to study social work, but although she is clearly intelligent, her English is not very good and she would probably have struggled to be accepted. She would also have found it difficult to find carers for her young children, and an income to keep her and her family going through the period of her study. She and her husband both received disability grants from the state at the time, but he since passed away. Liziwe is the fifth woman who initially wanted to study, also social work, but at the time of the 2010 survey she had been making money with her sewing, and wanted to rather pursue that.

However, Vida, who had been successful in her aspirations and in establishing a care society, had gone to university while being in the same situation, except that her first child, who was severely handicapped and died later, had been in her mother's care at the time when she decided to improve her life. She enrolled in secondary school again when she was twenty nine in 1993, wore a uniform with the children and obtained a good school end certificate, while she was working as a cleaner in a hotel. One of the hotel guests heard her story and gave her some money, which she used to enrol for a BA degree. She was successful in completing it, whilst working throughout. She only married and had another child when she had completed her degree.

The other seventeen women all achieved some functionings which enabled them to have at least a small income. The conclusion can therefore be reached that eight of the women had voiced an aspiration that was probably above their ability or beyond their resources at the time they attempted it, but possibly not completely unrealistic, while the others had expressed a more manageable and achievable aspiration. The eight women might have formulated this aspiration, reasoning that they have nothing to lose in aiming a little higher than they feel completely confident that they can achieve. As it became clear that they would have to achieve their aspirations largely by means of their own agency, obstacles would have become evident, and they would therefore have had the option to persevere, like Phumla who applied for university admission, or to adopt a lower aspiration, as in the case of Noxolo. She asked money from *Someleze* to do a computer literacy course, and then applied for work in industry, which she got. Nomaliso decided to rather apply for admission to a paramedic course than to consider studying nursing. When she discovered that she would have to improve her school

qualification, she also gave that up. Sindiswa did not attempt to study at all, and Liziwe put all her energy into her sewing career. In this way they experimented until they achieved a reasonable and achievable level for the stage at which they were.

Martha Nussbaum (2000) argues that the effort to find the correct level for one's aspirations is a universal and common process, and that we all have to adjust our aspirations to what is possible. She wanted to be an opera singer, and had to be satisfied with being a philosopher!

The question remains whether some of the women had indeed accepted a "realistic' level of aspiration, given severe structural constraints, or whether this might be seen as adaptation. This question probably relates to different levels of awareness which can be achieved during a lifetime – what might seem realistic in one situation might appear adaptive with more insight and awareness. It is an important and profoundly complex question, and one which has to be examined more deeply.

8.1.5 Personal history, psychology and identity

Personal histories are an important consideration in the process of considering one's aspirations, and during the life skills course in 2006 a considerable part of the training was devoted to reflection on their own life experiences, individually and in groups. Personality and psychology is also an inherent part of how all human beings and human action can be understood. Some individual histories, personal characteristics and psychological aspects of the women will be woven into the agency analysis in chapter nine.

Identity is seen here firstly as personal identity, and the question asked in the survey was: "Who are you as a person, on a deeper level, and how is that related to what you choose to do with your life?" It is of interest that most of the responses to this question were well articulated, and in many ways perceptive and indicative of self-knowledge. The women also reveal a degree of individuality and emotional transparency in their responses. This might be related to the fact that this subject was dealt with in the life skills course in 2006, but it is unlikely that these discussions would have created this level of insight in a large number of the women. It rather suggests that it is something that they have thought about over a period of time, which the course might have reinforced. In my work with them I got to know some of the women very well, and most of these responses seem to correspond with what I know about their personal characteristics.

Some examples of the responses are:

"*I am a good person in that I speak what I feel – I do not pretend*" (Esihle, 21.05.10).

"*I am a bubbly person, yet also shy. I am sensitive, and can get angry*" (Noxolo, 20.05.10).

"*I am a joker. I like having fun but I do not like people who hurt me. I can be bitter. I like working with people, and can apologise when I have done something wrong*" (Nozuko, 10.05.10).

"I like people, and am an open person, who is also free to say what is wrong. I think thoroughly about things" (Nomaliso, 17.05.10).

In ten of the nineteen responses to this question the women emphasised that they like to work with people, or that they are naturally attracted to people. On the other hand Liziwe, who initially wanted to do social work, said in 2010 that she likes to work with her hands, and that sewing therefore is a good outlet for her. A number of the women also mentioned that they tend to respond to people with needs. Patricia for instance said "I look out for the needy." Some of the responses therefore also referred to the second part of the question, namely whether their personality is related to the work they have chosen to do. It also confirms the notion of a *eudaimonic* approach to work (Chirkov, Sheldon and Ryan, 2011), in which the person is able to link her own nature, natural skills and interests to the ways in which she will organise her work.

The women's responses to this question showed that they are not so caught up in survival issues that they are unable to be reflective, and also reflective about themselves.

8.1.6 Social identity: culture, race, class and gender
Social identity issues such as *culture, race and gender* also played a role in the group. Khayelitsha is an example of a place in which economically and politically motivated migration and forms of late capitalism, as well as the specifically South African history, have shaped a range of changing social patterns. The challenge here will be to show how the participating women have created their own understanding of identity, culture, gender and race, and what patterns emerge from this (Gupta and Ferguson, 2001:3-4).

The questions on culture and gender in the 2010 questionnaire refer to how these aspects impact on aspirations. The question on culture was "Can you achieve your own ideals within your own culture? How?" I shall use their responses and other experiences of the group to show how the different women create different ways of understanding and using culture and tradition, and how these can influence the achievement of their aspirations.

All but two of the respondents said that their culture plays an important role in their lives and in the realisation of their dreams. Only Hazel and Thembeka said that they do not believe that traditional practices have any value, but only believe in God. The responses on culture, tradition and ritual indicated that the women who do believe in the traditional ways believe that one's ancestors will send you a dream if there is anything you should attend to. If one gets sick or if anything else goes wrong, or if something very good happens, it is also an indication that it is time for you to communicate with your ancestors by means of a ritual slaughtering and ceremony. When Ntombizodwa obtained a job she wanted to have a ceremony in the rural area, but had to postpone it for practical reasons. At the time when Patricia started her guesthouse, she invited me to a traditional ceremony at her house on a Saturday afternoon, to which all the people in her street were invited. When Nosisi fell ill she slaughtered a goat and had a traditional ceremony in the Eastern Cape, after which she started

to get better. Nozuko said that if you do not keep to the traditions, you are not a person, while Nomaliso said that if you don't follow them, you will get nowhere. Nomaliso's mother is in the process of becoming qualified as a traditional healer, and many of the family's resources are going towards that – it includes the sacrifice of livestock, and is a costly process. It is nevertheless seen as important, as things might otherwise go wrong. One of Nomaliso's children furthermore told us that she was "bewitched" by relatives because of her success at university, and this added an additional need for spiritual "protection", which the grandmother's status as healer would give. The daughter was very ambivalent about how seriously to take this, but eventually was convinced that it was serious, and got traditional herbs to protect herself as well. Her grandmother suggested that she goes to the Eastern Cape to cut off the last section of each of her fifth fingers in a traditional ceremony, but she decided not to do so.[151]

Francis was diagnosed with breast cancer, and as someone who is training to become a traditional healer herself she might have decided to use traditional medicine. She did not, or did not only do that, but is using the services of the Groote Schuur Hospital. On the other hand, the adult daughters of two of the sewing group members were both diagnosed as bipolar in 2012. Both saw this as the result of somebody else in the group having bewitched them. Rather than to seek more medical attention these two young women, not group members themselves but daughters of members, independently went to relatives in the Eastern Cape for a few weeks to perform the required traditional ceremonies, and to gain the protection they needed. It can therefore be seen that culture and tradition is not a unilateral social system which is invariably used in the same way. Different women in different situations will interpret their experiences uniquely, and changing conditions are impacting on these beliefs in a variety of ways.

The next question to be examined here is how the participating women interpret the issue of gender, what is expected of them under traditional rules, and whether they have the ability to influence and change these rules. Gender refers to the relationship between women and men, and to how equity, power, access and control is understood and exercised within that relationship.[152] The gender relationship is moreover not only a personal relationship between a man and a woman, but it is situated within a societal context, where historical patterns, cultural understandings, internal and external power configurations, economic and political arrangements and many other factors play a role. In South Africa the fluidity of the adaptation and interpretation of gender relations among African citizens was circumvented when the Black Administration Act no. 38 of 1927 decreed that African women married under customary law are considered minors, subject to the guardianship of their husbands (Baden *et al*, 1998:30).[153] This was repealed with the promulgation of the Age of Majority

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[151] See Ashforth (2005) for a discussion of the custom of 'bewitching' and its influence on development and democracy in urban democratic South Africa.
[152] http://findpdf.net/documents/Harvard-Gender-analytical-framework.html
[153] Whatever the traditional position of women had been in historical times, and there is no agreement on what that was, fixing it legally constrained evolutionary social change for this period.

Act in 1972, but the attitude of seeing women as minors did not change overnight. "The deeply embedded nature of patriarchy in South Africa has created an overarching cultural acceptance of the traditional moral authority of men as heads of household. Amongst African women, both in urban and rural settings, customary practice remains a determinant of their status as subordinate partners" (Baden *et al,* 1998:30). We have seen in chapters two and seven that many women in Khayelitsha consequently do not get married.[154]

Their gender situation was also an important reason for many to come to Cape Town. As women they were very limited in their ability to act while they lived in the rural area, and were freer to explore different income and lifestyle options in Cape Town - in fact, in a focus group discussion they said that this was one of the important reasons they came to the urban area (Conradie, 2008). The women in this group embraced the new freedom to think and act more freely and it is reflected in the degree of agency they engaged in. They repeatedly spoke about this freedom and how they also influence the gender norms in the rural areas when they visit.

At the same time, those who are married have to deal with the often paternalistic attitudes of their husbands, which are culturally reinforced. Francis, Sindiswa, Xola and Nozuko suggested that they had been subject to domestic abuse in earlier years, and Liziwe and Phumla were both physically abused by their husbands when they wanted to pursue their own aspirations.[155]

The impact of AIDS and domestic violence is also a thread which runs through the list of these efforts and achievements, and both of these issues are essentially gender issues in this context. Only Nomaliso had openly said that she was HIV positive from the start. She is still on ARV's and has now been HIV positive for more than ten years, but manages reasonably well. She is often low on energy and has to be careful of small infections, so is often not as active as she would otherwise have been. Nosisi was hospitalised during this period with TB, and there might also have been an HIV problem, but she has never discussed that with us. Her health problems have however undermined her business efforts. Phumla applied for admission to the University of the Western Cape to study nursing, and then suddenly died at the age of 33 with no known pre-existing symptoms. The story which spread in the community that it was the result of a stroke, which could be the case, but seems unlikely. There might have been an un-discovered medical condition, or there might have been domestic violence, which she had disclosed before. When she had decided, years earlier, to write her matric, her husband assaulted her and said she did not need this qualification. It might be that the application at university had prompted the same response, but there is no evidence for this and it has not been discussed in the group. Sindiswa is HIV positive but in reasonably good health. Due to a violent relationship with her partner she decided to split up with him and now lives on her own with her children, which she says is infinitely better for her and for the children.

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[154] There might be other contributing factors, as this question has not been specifically researched in this study.
[155] The often-repeated myth is that men would say that a woman who does something for herself is actually doing it to attract another man.

Thozama is HIV positive and contracted TB as well, which caused her to be hospitalised for a long period. Fezeka died in March 2103, from AIDS. She might have been HIV positive for a long period, although it had presumably been undetected at an early stage. Bongeka died of TB-related meningitis in 2010, and was probably also HIV positive, possibly without being aware of it. Vicky Ntozini, the peer mentor and outstanding entrepreneur in the area, was allegedly killed in her bedroom in 2012 in a domestic violence incident.[156]

Five of the 25 women interviewed had therefore experienced problems related to AIDS or their HIV status, and there might be more that had not reported it. Two died of AIDS during this period. It is clear that the women in Site C are subject to dangers and risks which make it harder for them to pursue their life goals. Both the subject of AIDS and that of domestic violence are sensitive issues to raise, and were never openly discussed in the group. Their gender position was therefore in some ways better and freer than it had been in the Eastern Cape, but in other ways they lacked the community support which they would have received there, and their freedom came with great risks.

In some cases a deep inner change occurred, and a woman would free herself from previously restrictive cultural conditions. Liziwe, for instance, had this to say: "*If this programme did not come, I would not have started to dream. It changed my life, from my culture and family, also my new family, my husband and his mother. I had to stay at home, clean, wash, cook. So you came, you told me, so my mind must open. You said: can you do things? I said yes, without my husband. Also without my family. Sometimes that was difficult. I thought my husband would slap me. Then I said to him: I am going, so slap me. I am waiting for you to hit me. Then he did not. Now it is easy to go to work. I make men's trousers. My husband said: you can't make that! I said: I can. He is jealous and thinks I will have an affair. I am so busy, I think about life, what I can do, I don't have time for affairs. It is 2010 now, and I think it will soon be 2013 – where will I be then?" (Liziwe, personal interview conducted on 26.05.10)*. Even in Liziwe's case however, things changed in 2011 when she was involved in a bus accident on her way to a funeral in the Eastern Cape, and had to spend some time economically inactive while she recovered.

We shall now look at the responses of the women to the survey questions on how their gender position influenced their aspirations and the prospect of realising these.

Out of the sixteen responses to the question "How are your aspirations influenced by the fact that you are a woman?", only three women saw the question in relation to themselves in the first place, all of them women who were not married at the time of the interview. These responses were:

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[156] Vicky was interviewed in the 2010 interviews, but because she was not a member but a peer mentor I did not use her responses in the assessment. She was very clear that the project had also motivated her to work harder on her aspirations, which were also to benefit others in the community.

"It is nice to see a woman doing things for herself. Even though I don't have a husband I told myself I will make it happen" (Patricia, 30.04.10). When I asked her at a different time whether she had ever considered marriage, she said that she had never met a man who she thought would not rely on her, and so she never considered it. She had had her three sons by three different men, who each lived with her for a while.

"I am an independent woman and I do not need a man. The hard thing is that I cannot have my child with me, she stays in the Eastern Cape with my parents" (Noma, 19.05.10).

"I am very determined as a woman. Even when my husband was alive I thought to myself that I would be independent so that one day when he passes away I would work on my own. Even now I don't need to sleep with men to get food on my table but I work hard" (Thembeka, 22.05.10).

Twelve responses were that women can work on their aspirations for the sake of their families and the community as a whole, and the benefit to themselves would possibly be mentioned as a third option. Liziwe, the sixteenth respondent, said that a woman can be stopped by her husband or her culture in achieving her aspirations. With this statement she showed that she was not secure in her newfound self-confidence, and she probably voiced a fear which others felt but did not express. After Vicky Ntozini was murdered in 2012, the women in the group started to discuss this aspect more openly and Francis and Vida decided to form a support group for women in the area, where the danger of domestic violence would be discussed openly. This has not yet happened.

The last question in this section deals with race and the intersection of race and gender. In an effort to ascertain how the women saw the interrelationship between these dimensions, two questions were asked:

1. How are your aspirations influenced by your being a woman living in Khayelitsha?
2. Would it have been different if you had been an Afrikaans or English speaking woman in Cape Town? How?

Only African people live in Khayelitsha, and therefore the first question was an indirect question on the impact of race on aspirations. As language is closely related to race in Cape Town, the second question was phrased around language rather than to ask directly what impact being African had on their aspirations. This connection was however misunderstood by many respondents and it might have been better to ask the race question directly.

To the first question there were fifteen responses. Eight of these referred to the collective struggle that women in Khayelitsha have shared and how that strengthened them. Nomaliso (17.05.10) formulated it as follows:

"In Khayelitsha people are poor. We are a lot of people and not educated and not employed and this makes other women think that when they have this stigma that a lot of people have in Khayelitsha it's the end of the road. So you have to be strong as a woman."

Nobody responded to this question in terms of race. Francis (09.04.10) had an interesting response:

"*People do not want to stand up and be counted and become part of the solution. People want readymade. Some young women and men of today are lazy to take up opportunities presented to them. Khayelitsha and many other areas where poor people live are being spoilt or look up to government for answers and solutions. I would like to live a legacy that says that I was part of the solution and builders of Khayelitsha and Site C.*"

The responses to the language question, number two above, were more varied. Five women responded to the question as it was asked, and said that language and education were connected, and that it is better if one had a good education so that your English would be good. The question was however intended to provoke a response on the women's perceptions of the extent to which belonging to a different race group would change your exposure to opportunities, without asking this directly. The rest of the women did in fact respond to this underlying question, and eight of them said in different ways that they are not worse off because they are black and Xhosa speaking. Some of these responses are:

"*I can think like a white or a coloured woman, even if I cannot speak like them*" (Nomaliso, 17.05.10).

"*No, it would make no difference because I love being a black woman*" (Nosisi, 09.04.10).

"*Back then we used to feel like this, but the ANC taught me that all women are equal and similar*" (Nozuko, 10.05.10).

"*I like and love to be a black African. I am proud of who I am*" (Phumla, 30.04.10).

Two of the women had a different response:

"*Life is better for people who are English and Afrikaans speaking in Cape Town. Colour is the curse*" (Ntombizodwa, 22.05.10).

"*I always feel that white and coloured people have better networks and privileges, they are born with opportunities and most of the black people continue to struggle*" (Sindiswa, 26.05.10).

Two other responses of women who were interviewed but who had not been in the project from the start, and who were therefore not assessed, will be used here as they had interesting responses to this particular question.
Cynthia said: "*Yes, English and Afrikaans speaking women are better off – they have social networks that sustain them*" (13.04.10).
Nozakeyi responded: "*I have the same energy and determination but less support*" (12.04.10).

As these were responses to open questions, they need not reflect opposite views, and could all be seen to be valid. In a focus group discussion the women would probably all have confirmed that they would be better off with good English language skills, as the first five women had maintained. They would probably also have confirmed the pride that the larger group felt in being African women, and if specifically asked whether women of other race and language groups had had better opportunities they would probably also have supported that point of view. As newcomers to the Western Cape they simply do not have the same networks which they recognise other women to have, and although they would not have felt that they wanted to belong to a different race group, with the historical trajectory along which they had come to their present position it would be difficult not to agree with Ntombizodwa that racism, the emphasis on skin colour, is the curse which diminishes their opportunities.

One last discussion on their personal and group profiles will deal with emotions and aspirations. In response to a question on how they feel regarding their aspirations, eight women said happy or positive, three were reasonably positive, and Patricia, Boniswa and Nozuko felt bad because they lacked the resources to fulfil their dreams. In some cases, like that of Nomaliso, her response did not so much refer to her aspirations as to the feeling she had when speaking to people though. "I can see people are inspired when I talk," was her response. The three women who felt reasonably positive, Nella, Noxolo and Sindiswa, all expressed hope rather than happiness. Although their emotions were very important in the course of the project, these changed from time to time depending on how things went. It is clear that the motivation that kept them involved for a period of four years was based on choices which reflect deeper values and necessities and not on emotions as such.

8.1.7 Group relations as an influence on choice

Group relations could best be observed within the context of *Someleze*, the organisation formed by the women who wanted to achieve their voiced aspirations. Initially they benefitted from the deliberate group formation which had been undertaken during the life skills course, and the group cohesion was good. This cohesion partly lasted throughout the life of the project, and many of the women still see and support each other on a regular basis. There have however also been numerous small incidents of group conflict, mostly about resources. While they were still working in Esther's house, two sets of conflict occurred. Firstly the group fell out with Esther herself, and she left them. Secondly, and more seriously, they refused to accept training and quality control from Nomsa. Her skills were of a much higher standard than the rest, and the trainers at Bernina had recommended that she help with the quality control of the whole group. She is also a soft-spoken and gentle woman, who did not impose her authority. The members nevertheless refused to accept guidance from one of their own members, and lost the opportunity to do work which could be marketed outside the township. This was an important decision as it contributed to limiting the capability to market their wares outside the township, and thus to get better prices for their wares.

From 2008 onwards they worked in the container centre of three rooms which had been donated to them. Three members, Liziwe, Patricia and Thembeka, decided in 2008 to leave the group and to work with Patricia's cousin, a good seamstress. They made very good

progress and contributed to a large jeans order from one of the big chain stores in the country. They also made a range of other items and learnt good skills. Unfortunately this group also later split up because of conflict.

In the meantime the rest of the women continued working in the containers. When asked in 2010 whether they wanted to continue working with *Someleze*, Boniswa, Nella and Patricia, three of the most involved women, all said that that the relationships in the organisation were too conflict ridden as a result of Francis' leadership style. They all blamed her for being too domineering and 'bossy', and wanted to have her out of the organisation. I responded that they had elected her as chairperson and would just have to elect another person at the AGM. Before that could happen she had however withdrawn, and worked on her sewing from home. She also founded an NPO for AIDS orphans in her area and started to care for about 25 AIDS orphans who live close to her home, ensuring that they have food and that other basic needs are met.

The rest of the sewing group then continued on their own, until they amicably split into two groups in 2013, as one group wanted to get paid regularly and the other group only wanted to receive money at the end of the year. Nella continues as the chairperson of the sewing group in the containers.

The catering group had an early conflict in 2007 in which Nozuko and Patricia had a severe confrontation over money. I tried to involve the whole group to help them to get to the root of the problem, but the two women decided to rather leave the group and to each work on their own. The remaining members of the catering group worked well together, but it is now clear that their progress had been constrained by Fezeka's health problems as a result of being HIV positive, and later developing AIDS.

Group relations in the home based care group had been good from the start, possibly because the joint chairpersons, Nomaliso and Noxolo, both have good interpersonal skills and were able to negotiate solutions to potential conflicts. Vida had also been involved in outbursts of temper during *Someleze* meetings, but she was able to see the harm it did and to make peace again.

It is clear from the above that the inability to deal with conflict constructively was one of the major dynamics in the group, and it also played a role in their success or lack of success with their work. Because resources are scarce, the women felt very competitive about the resources which were made available, and because they had not been in a situation before where they had to create businesses themselves the skills of doing so collectively were gained as they proceeded. If they had managed to use the best of what each member had to offer, they would probably have been much more successful, but the choices different women made on numerous occasions to rather do things their own way, reinforced independence and autonomy, but did not support the growth of their collective enterprise. The continuous small conflicts therefore also impacted on their aspirations, as more and more women decided to work on their own rather than in the group.

8.1.8 Judgement and choice

We also asked what particular choices the women had made during the time of working on their aspirations. Ten of the responses indicated that the women had taken important decisions which helped them to direct their own futures. These responses included the following statements:

"I decided to be part of a solution by joining Someleze, being part of the sewing group. I also became a street committee member and became a SANCO committee member. My choices have not changed, I'm just adding to them and I am achieving them" (Francis, 09.04.10).

"I promised myself that I will continue with my B&B even when it is challenging" (Hazel, 18.05.10).

"I first opened an account for my three children. I decided to save R50 every month for each one of them. Then, if they passed grade 12, they can go to university, it can help them and me. I also made another decision. I asked my mother who has a preschool in the Eastern Cape not to take so many loans, but to go to Cashbuild, buy material and build her own house. Previously my mother shouted and borrowed a lot, my father was not working, now they have four rooms in the Eastern Cape. The money is paid from her work in the Educare Centre. Previously she paid high interest on her loans, but now she saw it and stopped. I made a third decision. Yes, I listen to my husband, but sometimes I do not, because then I would not do things. I decided to do things, whether he likes it or not. Since 2004 there has been no hitting." (Liziwe, 26.05.10).

"I stayed focused on what I want to achieve – to become a nurse. I also decided to be independent and do things on my own. If I had enough money to educate my children I would study nursing" (Ntombizodwa, 22.05.10).

"That I work for myself because I won't get anything sitting down. With this small knowledge I am going forward. Like a person walking through the tunnel with a light I will go forward" (Noxolo, 20.05.10).

"I decided not to be active in politics any more but to focus on my family, my work, my NGO, to be able to really achieve my goals for my work" (Vida, 21.05.10).

"In these four years I realised what I want in my life and have seen that my family also supports me. I have also discovered that I can be whatever I want to be if I put my whole strength into it. Without thinking about my aspirations I would still have been sitting in the sun every day" (Phumla, interviewed 30.04.10).

Three of the other respondents just repeated their aspirations, while two indicated that they had decided to withdraw from the group. Boniswa decided to work quietly in her house, and Thembeka decided to return to the Eastern Cape. Esihle, who joined the project in the second

year, said that she did not decide on her own, but sat with her husband while he advised her on what she should decide.

For the ten women who did make choices on their own autonomy and actions, it sounded as if these were important in shaping their actions. The quotations indicate a process of reflection and of judgment, leading to the choices which they made. It is not possible to assess whether judgment always preceded agency, and in the real world these processes probably occur in a non-linear way. It is useful to return for a moment to the discussion at the beginning of this chapter, and to consider that the kinds of choices which the women reported on here, required a time of deliberation and choice without which they would probably not have attempted a series of actions.

8.1.9 Specific actions taken between 2006 and 2010

In the 2010 survey I asked the women what specific actions they had taken in relation to the realisation of their aspirations. Nine had done the different sewing courses I arranged under the auspices of *Someleze*, and all of them were sewing and selling their wares in 2010. A number of them had formed groups, broken up and formed or joined other groups, or they were working on their own.

Eight of the women had done the home-based care training I organised. This included a short course with the Red Cross Society, and a longer course presented by St. Luke's Hospice in Cape Town.[157] Seven of the eight subsequently volunteered in Site C by going from door to door and rendering assistance to older or sick people who needed care. Nine of the women also took turns to work as volunteers at the *Someleze* centre, cooking soup for the needy or rendering other services. At some stage they used their own resources to cook the soup, but I then managed to get a sponsor to assist, and they also found different other organisations to help.

The home based care group also reported other positive and related activities. When the interviews were conducted in 2006 Vida was already in the process of forming a care organisation. In the intervening period she built this up to be a successful NPO. Bongeka volunteered in this organisation until she contracted TB-related meningitis and died in 2008. Ntombizodwa first volunteered with an NGO, through the mediation of *Someleze*, and was then employed by them as a health visitor. Noma did not get a care job after the training, but said that she had learnt interpersonal skills in the training – "how to treat others." She did get a job in the security sector.

Five of the women had attended the catering training I arranged with the Department of Human Ecology at the University of the Western Cape. Four of them afterwards made and sold food. Patricia did catering and sewing for an extra income, and also at times worked as a domestic worker to get extra cash. Both Thozama and Nozuko reported that they did nothing

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[157] This course was separately sponsored by the Quaker Friends in Cape Town.

– Thozama because if her health, and Nozuko because she needed credit to set something up and lacked that.[158]

In addition to these activities three of the women, Vida, Zandile and Boniswa started vegetable gardens, and Nella started a hair salon with her adult children. The outcomes of their actions are summarised in column five of table 7. These are closely related to their actions, as can be seen in the table.

The actions which the women took showed to what extent they were willing to engage in concrete tasks towards the achievement of their aspirations. The largest part of the breakthroughs that the women experienced was undoubtedly due to their own efforts, and the ways in which they were able to use what I and the various funders I accessed offered them, in training and small economic and other opportunities. Through using their own agency, many of the women responded to the opportunity to achieve an ideal. Their agency is seen particularly in their strong determination to succeed. The increased agency of most of the women is arguably one of the most important consequences of this action research – something which gave them the determination to keep trying until they succeed, and also to be judicious in how they spend their energy and resources.

It is possible to therefore conclude that the voicing of and working on aspirations can activate agency, and the ability to sustain commitment over longer periods (Conradie and Robeyns, 2013). The women had to engage deeply with their own lives and futures. They stated that it gave them a sense of direction and purpose, even when there were many obstacles. They also said that they had decided on new activities that would help them to change the direction of their lives. The words of the women often seemed unrealistically optimistic in comparison to their real-life experiences, but they expressed determination and commitment. "I will never give up" was said in many different ways by different women (Conradie, 2008). They also expressed a number of expected outcomes continuously, throughout the action research programme, so that these can be seen as key dimensions of success in their perception: autonomy, or being accountable to themselves, and independence, was mentioned by almost everybody. In addition some of the women emphasised the importance of working towards a personal goal.

On the representation of the relationship between aspirations and agency in diagram 6 I expect adaptation to happen, if it does happen, in relation to aspirations, choice or action. I shall however first consider their actions before returning to the discussion on adaptation.

Table 7 is presented next, with a summary of the findings which relate to the relationship between aspirations and capabilities. The table will be explained in section 8.1.11.

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[158] See also the discussion on intergroup relations.

Table 7: Aspirations and capabilities[159]

Name: all names changed	Aspirations 2006	Aspirations 2010	Key actions taken between 2006 and 2010 in relation to aspirations	Key outcomes	Functionings health & educ. in 2006	Functionings (fu)/ Capabilities (ca) expanded?[160]	Functionings durable?[161]	Capabilities not realised[162]
Boniswa	Money, brick house, sewing opportunity	To do sewing, sell and become independent	Worked daily with the sewing group from 2006-2009, then withdrew. Did sewing training course with Bernina in 2007. Bought a sewing machine from Someleze and can continue on her own. Makes and sells pinafores. Started a small garden.	More knowledgeable and resourceful. Still no brick house and withdrew from project because of power issues. Bought her sewing machine and can continue on her own	8 years of schooling; moderate health (2/5), high blood pressure, crippled in a bus accident	Yes, capability expansion: she has an asset for additional income, and feels more knowledgeable	Yes, if her health allows it	Becoming part of an organised and collective business venture
Esihle	Joined 2008, so not part of voicing of aspirations	To get a job so her children can get proper education	Worked at Philani home-based care, lost that job. Sold 2nd hand clothes. Attended Someleze group 2008-2011 Did 2 accredited home-based care training courese	Left the project in 2011 to look for a paid job	unknown	Yes. Was able to leave the project and to find paid employment: fu expanded	Uncertain	
Francis	A job as fashion designer.	Wants her 5 children to be independent and successful, well educated.	Did Bernina sewing training course 2007. Worked with sewing group daily from 2006-2009, then left to sew in her house, selling products. Was building contractor for government's People's Housing Process in Site C, oversaw the building of 149 houses. Oversaw road construction in 2	"Someleze has changed my life for the better." She has had contract jobs, joined different organisations and gained community leadership positions, and got a brick house. Chairperson of Someleze. All choices are focused on her independence and helping others	11 years of schooling; good health (3/5); high blood pressure	Yes. She used all opportunities and created more for herself and others. Increased both her fu and ca	Yes. She gained self-confidence and management skills	Cannot yet exercise her leadership in a cooperative manner, which would enable the group to grow

[159] This table was first published in Conradie, 2013:200-208.

[160] The question asked here is whether she has extended her repertoire of beings and doings, and therefore her future opportunities.

[161] The next question is whether these beings and doings could be repeated in future.

[162] The last column refers to opportunities she clearly did not make use of.

			areas of Khayelitsha. Worked in political structures and with SANCO. Daily supports a group of AIDS orphans. In training as traditional healer					
Hazel	Wanted an income, as she had lost her a formal job.	To be successful in her business – catering and a bed and breakfast (over ambitious)	Sold sweets and fruit from her house. Sold cooked food to construction workers, used money to buy furniture for B&B. Attended Someleze meetings regularly.	'Money is a problem, but I am happy that I am realizing my aspirations"	10 years of schooling; poor health (1/5)	Moderate increase in fu– slow progress with community catering	Not clear. Her health is not good and she is very dependent	
Liziwe	Wanted to study social work. Feared husband's opposition.	"I want to help myself. I want to know how to sew things myself, without help, then assist others." (More realistic aspiration)	Did Bernina sewing training and worked with sewing group. Left Someleze, works with another group, learning complex sewing skills.	Has a reasonable income and enjoys her work. Overcame her fear of her husband; insists on gender equality.	12 years of schooling, excellent health (5/5)	Yes. Overcame considerable problems and different level of awareness. Increase in fu and ca.	Yes, she changed her attitudes and perceptions and gained new skills	
Noma-liso	Foster home for orphans, but lacked money. Later changed her mind.	"To achieve what I wanted to at school – be a doctor or nurse. To not struggle, be independent."	Attended 2 home-based care courses. Highly recommended during internship at Lentegeur Hospital.	Co-leader of Someleze care group (works at volunteer rate) - able and highly motivated, within her health ability. "I see change; people feel inspired when I talk to them."	11 years of schooling. Has been HIV + for 10 years, health reasonably good	Yes, fu expanded: nursing and counseling skills; ca expanded: opportunities for independence	Yes, if her health allows it	
Nella	Money, fix the house, get sewing skills	To use her sewing to build a business. (Chair of the sewing group)	Did Bernina sewing course in 2007and worked with sewing group since then. The group met in her house for 2 years. Now is leader of the 12 members in the successful sewing group.	"I have not lost hope" – but she also feels discouraged by the power issues in the group. Nevertheless very active, works in the sewing group every day and motivates others to continue.	4 years of schooling. Good health (3/5)	Expanded fu: sewing and leadership skills. Expanded ca: better work opportunities	Yes	

Noma	Income to support child and parents in the rural area	She wanted her own house and car	Did 2 home-based care training courses. Attended Someleze meetings regularly.	Got a job as a security guard in a shopping centre, low paid and long hours; quite unhappy. Also living in her brother's shack in Philippi, high crime area.	11 years of schooling. Health fair (2/5)	Expanded her fu: formal job; expanded her ca: entering job market	Yes, if she can learn from the current situation to improve job situation	
Ntombi-zodwa	Wanted a job in care work	"I like to help people – therefore chose care work – at school I dreamt of being a nurse."	Did 2 home-based care courses. Did voluntary care work in the area, also volunteered for an NGO, Olive Leaf, arranged by Someleze.	Got a job in care work with a reasonable income through the volunteer placement arranged by Someleze. "I am happy now because I can see where I am going."	12 years of schooling. Health fair (2/5)	Fu expanded: job skills; ca expanded: independence and security.	Lost that job, but has better skills to find another	
Noxolo	Tertiary education, maybe in social work. As a disabled person (polio as a child) she wanted to do what "normal" people do.	"That my children have a better life than me through education – my parents did not have much. Also to help others, maybe through social work."	Did 2 home-based care courses. Did basic computer course, funded by Someleze. Tried very hard to get a well-paid job. Volunteered as fieldworker for the Organisation for the Physically Disabled. Then fitted machine parts in a factory, but the hours were very long. Then had a 5 month trial as HR intern, but was not employed at the end of the period.	Tried very hard to get a well-paid job. None of these worked, so she is unemployed again.	12 years of schooling – finished at night school through tremendous effort. Health good (3/5) in spite of walking with a crutch	Fu. expanded through exposure to the open job market. Ca also expanded; but open market is now restrictive. Downward adaptation?	Because of her disability it is hard to find employment which would meet her requirements, therefore unclear	
Nosisi	Desperately needed an income. Nothing she tried had worked	Wanted a business, so that she and her family do not have to suffer	Built up a small meat selling business but got sick (HIV and TB?) and her family mismanaged the business while she was in hospital.	She is hopeful and wants to try again.	11 years of schooling; health was good (3/5)	She expanded her fu when she attempted to build up a business, although she lost it all.	Yes, she did it once and can do it	
Nozuko	A job and money to extend the house	A successful business	Attended two catering courses. Received a stove from Someleze for a catering business but the business did not take off.	She tried to establish a business but nothing worked. The Someleze members did not want her to work in the group because of a history of conflict	7 years of schooling; very good health	Fu did not expand though she received training and equipment.	N a	Did not use chosen training and equipment

Patricia	Many ideals – catering business, b&b, orphanage	To make sure that the b&b and catering business work - also for the sake of the community	Attended two catering courses. Conflict with Nozuko over seed money so changed to sewing. Received sewing machine from Someleze. Tried to establish a B&B, worked hard on this.	Several volunteers were introduced to her to assist, but the goal of establishing a b&b for the western tourist has not yet succeeded. Cares for one orphan	11 years of schooling; health fair (2/5) – high blood pressure and a stroke	Expanded fu considerably; expanded ca, also considerable ca constraints	Yes, if her health allows it	To select priorities, starting with smaller ones
Phumla	Wanted to be a nurse	To be a nurse	Completed 2 home-based care trainings, worked with Someleze voluntary home-based care group. Paid application fee at university for nursing course.	Died unexpectedly, aged 33, shortly after the second interview, reputedly from a stroke. This was just after she had applied for university admission.	12 years of schooling; health status unknown	Expanded her fu and ca. Increase in gender awareness and agency	N a	
Sindis--wa	No initial interview, and not part of the initial process	Wants to be educated as a nurse	Did 2 home-based care courses. Worked with Someleze in home-based care for 3 years.	She was able to get paid employment in a supermarket and as the project could not afford to give her an income she took it	unknown	Expanded her fu. Ca constrained by lack of training for nurse aids	Yes	
Thoza-ma	Wanted her own hair salon, tired of working for others	Wants to work for herself with her own hands	Did not attend any meetings or courses 2006-2008. 2009: sold fruit 2010: back to Somleze, hoping for something concrete.	Had TB and maybe HIV+. Was very positive but left soon after the last interview.	11 years of schooling; fair health (2/5). Later developed TB and was hospitalised	No visible expansion of either fu or ca	N a	Did not engage her own agency, or show initiative
Thembe ka	No initial interview; not part of initial process	Wanted to return to the rural area and sell her sewing there	Attended Someleze meetings since 2007, did sewing course and worked with Someleze group. Later joined another group of Someleze women who sewed successfully with Patricia.	Worked successfully with a group of Someleze women in a separate group for a while, then conflict erupted and she continued on her own. Was happy with her work and ideas.	unknown	Expanded fu as work skills increased; expanded ca as work opp. increased	Yes, she is planning to create her own work opportunities in the rural area	
Vida	Care for others; house for her family; post-graduate education for herself	"My main dream is a just society, that is the alleviation of poverty"	Built up a very successful care society named Iliso.	Her care society gets international funding, extensive community involvement in a range of development programmes in the urban and rural areas; possibly a house for her family and a building for the NPO. Funders also provided a manager.	12 years of schooling; went back to secondary school in her 30's to achieve this. BA degree while a cleaner; good health (3/5)	Expanded fu considerably; expanded ca considerably for self and others. Aspiration: post-graduate study, which is within her reach	Yes, completely durable, and are increasing	

Xola	Wanted a business to support her child and mother.	To help people, especially the sick, elderly and frail	Did 2 home-based care courses, attended Someleze meetings. Active as counselor in Someleze, works for volunteer rate.	"I am developing and moving toward my dream. This has evoked dreams which were long forgotten or suppressed." Very active in care work and counseling in the Someleze Advice Office.	12 years of schooling; health fair (2/5)	Expanded fu through training and work; expanded ca through increased skills	Yes, she increased in personal skills and self-confidence	
Fezeka (Died 20 March 2013, TB and AIDS)	Wanted to do sewing to earn an income	Did not attend the interview session.	Attended all the catering training, chairperson of catering group. Also in training as traditional healer.	Now chairperson of the catering group at Someleze. Doing well and highly motivated.	10 years of schooling; good health (3/5)	Expanded fu and skills; increased work opportunities (ca)	Yes	
Zandile	Wanted to do sewing to earn an income	-	Attended Bernina sewing training, in spite of having one hand only. Made and sold products. Grew and sold vegetables.	Unexpectedly died in the Eastern Cape in 2009, cause unknown (asthma?)	7 years of schooling, lost a hand as a child; asthma sufferer	Expanded fu with training; ca constrained by her disability	N a	
Thandi	Wanted to do sewing to earn an income for her household of 5 children	-	Attended Bernina sewing training, worked with the sewing group for 3 years. Left for the Eastern Cape to work there in 2009.	Transferred her small business to the Eastern Cape.	7 years of schooling; very good health (4/5)	Expanded fu in terms of sewing skills; ca constrained by low education and lack of English	Yes, she will create work opportunities in the rural area	
Nomsa	Transfer her sewing skills to others to work with them	-	She worked with the sewing group for two years as a highly skilled trainer and quality controller.	Group could not accept her superior sewing skills, so she left when she was offered a position as seamstress in 2007	9 years schooling; excellent heath (5/5)	Fu expanded by leadership development; ca constrained by group dynamics	Yes, she has excellent skills	
Bongeka	Very keen to look after others, wanted to nurse.	-	Attended and completed 2 home-based care courses. Volunteered with Vida in the Iliso care society and with Someleze. Committed member, secretary of Someleze.	Died in 2010 of TB meningitis	11 years of schooling; very good health	Fu expanded; ca constrained by lack of training opportunities for nurse aids	N a	
Esther	Wanted a job, needed an income	-	Attended Bernina training course. Worked daily with the sewing group which met at her house for a year.	Group excluded her after the training due to conflict. She then got a job, but suffered a stroke. Is now at home.	10 years of schooling; poor health, high blood pressure	Fu expanded with training and equipment; ca expanded with employment. Health problems	Probably not, as she has had a stroke	

8.1.10 Achieved functionings and key outcomes

The key actions which the women took in relation to achieving their aspirations during the period between 2006 and 2010 are contained in column 4 of table 7, and the key outcomes in column 5. The key actions were taken from the 2010 interviews, and so present their own assessment, corroborated by me. The key outcomes column contains my assessment.

As can be seen in table 7, some of the women had taken numerous actions to realise their aspirations, others fewer, and less focussed actions. Only two of the women had not taken any visible actions which could be directly attributed to their decision to work on their aspirations, and so provided no evidence of increased functionings. They are Nozuko, the 12th woman, and no 16, Thozama. In Nozuko's case she received a stove from Someleze which was not used at all for a period of three years, and her catering business consequently never took off. Thozama contracted TB, probably while being HIV positive,[163] and was hospitalised for a very long period. When she was discharged she was very weak, and although she wanted to pursue her goals, was simply not able to do so.

The new functionings recorded in column 4 of table 7 include the attendance of the different training courses which I set up and paid for from sponsorship obtained for this purpose,[164] working in small groups with the machines bought by *Someleze,* on catering, or on different other individual actions. I initially tried to differentiate between those who had gained much increased functionings and those whose improvement was more marginal. Over time I however realised that this was not a linear process, and that their position in relation to market activities is so precarious that things can change within a short period of time for better or for worse. Somebody like Noxolo who had seemed to have gained much in 2010 when she got a good job in the formal sector was later disadvantaged by market conditions. She lost her job, and is now again unemployed. Ntombizodwa achieved her lifelong aspiration by getting a job as a home visitor in a health NGO, and then the NGO lost its funding base and retrenched all the home based care workers in 2011.

8.1.11 Assessment: did functionings and capabilities increase as a result of efforts to realise their aspirations?

Having considered the above information, we are ready to ask whether the actions the women took in relation to their aspirations increased their functionings and their capabilities. This assessment is summarised in table 7 and will be explained here. I first recorded their key aspirations in 2006 and again in 2010. In most cases the aspiration had become more focussed and specific during that time, as can be seen in table 7. I then listed the different actions the woman had undertaken to specifically achieve this aspiration, and assessed the

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[163] HIV and TB are so closely related that they have been described as co-epidemic. TB is the leading cause of death for HIV positive people. http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/health/diseases/tuberculosis/the-link-between-tuberculosis-and-hiv/

[164] These included home-based care courses with the Red Cross Society and with St Luke's Society, Sewing courses with Bernina, catering courses at the University of the Western Cape and occasionally computer literacy courses in Site C. Four women also did hairdressing courses with a salon in Mowbray. These courses were all sponsored by the Quaker Friends, Cape Town.

key outcomes from information gained during the interview. In addition I added her health and education functionings from the 2006 household survey, as those were likely to have influenced her agency. With all this information available an assessment was made and motivated whether her functionings had increased between 2006 and 2010. I assumed that an increase in her functionings would necessarily imply an increase in her capabilities, as capabilities are potential functionings. I also assessed whether these functionings would be durable, from what I know of her, and finally listed capabilities which in my view had not been realised.

Apart from the key actions taken and key outcomes of these, table 7 contains three more columns on functionings and capabilities. In column 6 health and education functionings are summarised as they were reported in 2006. Both of these sets of functionings are instrumentally of key importance (Sen, 1999:10) as can be seen from some of the examples in table 7. Being crippled in a bus accident or being HIV positive has a negative impact on one's ability to exercise choice, as does a low level of formal education. These health and education functionings were taken into account when the expansion of functionings was assessed (column 7). The question was then also asked whether the new functionings would last - whether they would be durable. In 15 out of 25 cases they were, but this is an assessment which is based on the women's situation during a specific time slice. As argued above, things can change and in a few years' time such an assessment might look quite different. Lastly the question was asked which capabilities had not been realised, and once again I made the assessment based on available information and on observation over the period of involvement.

In column 7 I come to the conclusion that 23 of the 25 women had managed to increase their functionings and their capabilities. Only Nozuko and Thozama had not managed to increase their functionings visibly. There might have been small increases in the functionings of these two women during this time, but these were not related to their stated aspirations.

8.1.12 Capability constraints, conversion factors and adaptive preferences

There are two important remaining questions. The first is what we know and understand about the women's own contributions to the increase of their capabilities, that is, their agency and actions. This will be discussed in greater depth in chapter nine. The second question is what social constraints they were faced with, and that question will be discussed here. Although constraints can be viewed from different vantage points, as possibly social, personal or political constraints, these aspects, as well as conversion factors and adaptation, are ultimately interrelated in the life experience of an individual. That is therefore how they will be discussed here.

If we consider this study as an exploration of how people in a typical poverty trap can possibly succeed in beginning to move upward, despite severe and entrenched obstructions and constraints, the question of how they perceive these constraints is a vital one. It also places a specific emphasis on the level at which they aim. If one has to overcome a big barrier, you might be tempted to aim at a higher level than what would be seen as realistic.

The question we asked in the survey was: "What are the deepest limitations to what you want to achieve?" Out of eighteen responses eleven people said 'money'. A number made it clear that money was seen as instrumental, in that if they had had money they would have been able to study, to get their business going, or have the freedom to really think what they wanted to do. Two women said that their lack of education was their main limitation, while Noxolo replied that her physical disability and her lack of good spoken English counted against her when she applied for work. Nosisi also saw her bad health as her biggest limitation. Nozuko thought that her abusive alcaholic husband and her marriage to him had been the biggest limitation in her life, while Nomaliso thought that there were not enough organisations to help people to achieve their goals. Francis was again unique in her response. She thought that people's laziness and dependence was the greatest limitation to progress. The women on the whole therefore saw their condition of poverty and exclusion, associated with poor education, as the reason why they are not able to overcome their situation. Linked to these factors are the health and domestic violence problems which were discussed above. This is probably a good summary of factors which limit them, but I want to specifically explore the ways in which capability constraints, conversion factors and adaptation might work together to limit their choices.

I would like to return to the discussion under 8.1.4 above, where the question was raised whether the women's aspirations were realistic. I want to propose that this is a central question in the consideration of constraints and adaptation. If we accept the fact that human agents very often, probably most often, are not entirely certain that their aspirations and goals are realistic, and that they need to experiment with the exact level which they are able to achieve at a given time, the process of adaptation appears in a much more flexible light than we often encounter it in the literature (Clark, 2012:3-5). This would suggest that one would form an aspiration, possibly with optimism and in the hope that it might be realisable. In the course of taking action to attempt this realisation, one might become aware of the way in which capability constraints hamper one, and also of the ways in which conversion factors impact on one's actions. This dynamic process may then become an interaction between the need to increase agency versus a realistic adaptation of the level at which one wants to place the bar.[165] If conditions look favourable, one can higher the bar, and *vice versa*. In assessing adaptive preferences, the crucial consideration would then be whether the person has sufficiently considered the *realism of her level of aspiration*. If she lowered the bar realistically, the action would be adaptive, but it would not be adaptive in the sense most often used in the capability approach, of resignation or habituation. Resignation or habituation would imply a reduction of agency involvement. Reducing the level of her aspiration realistically might be a disappointment, but should not lead to a reduction of agency. Adaptation of her aspiration would only have happened if she would have had a

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[165] The image of adaptation as a lowering of the bar at a high jump was suggested by one of my students, Grace Nkomo.

reasonable chance of success but decided against attempting it, because of resignation, indoctrination, or intimidation (Clark, 2012:3).[166]

I shall now return to table seven above, in which the women's individual situations are summarised, and use the same information to reflect on the interrelatedness of constraints, conversion and adaptation in some of their lives.

Boniswa has been without a brick house for at least all of her adult life, and this capability constraint has limited her options. She is not the only one either – eleven other respondents only had a temporary shack to live in at the time of the 2010 survey; some with no access to a toilet at all, as in Liziwe's case. This lack of proper housing is a first and major capability constraint for almost half of the women in the 2010 survey. The consequences include poor health conditions, with high TB infection rates due to the damp, a lack of access to water and electricity in the shack, or dangerous electrical connections, and a dangerous and uncomfortable environment overall. Khayelitsha was developed on swampland, and conditions in the temporary housing areas are often very wet in winter. This capability constraint can also be seen as an environmental conversion factor for the twelve women who are shack dwellers, together with their families. For Boniswa, who was badly hurt in a bus accident a few years ago, and who is physically disabled as a result, it has the additional disadvantage that the damp in the temporary house increases her symptoms and body pain in winter. The house is therefore closely linked to her health condition, which can be seen as a personal conversion factor. Lastly the power struggle in the *Someleze* group has convinced her to withdraw and to work on her own, which could possibly be seen as a social conversion factor. Did she adapt her preference by deciding not to work with the group? This decision clearly disadvantaged her in a number of ways: as a result she now has fewer business opportunities, and she also has less social interaction on a daily basis. On the other hand she has gained in autonomy and peace of mind, and has retained the advantages of her early cooperation with *Someleze*. Nevertheless, her life is hemmed in by her capability constraints, and in living her daily life she is able to only choose between a small number of alternatives. She has the capability resource of a monthly disability grant[167] with which she can buy food, and small pieces of material, which she uses to sew and sell. She has a constant battle with arthritic pain due to her accident, and medical services are rudimentary. She has therefore probably not held herself back, but rather found a level at which she can function reasonably well. I have therefore concluded that Boniswa did not adapt her aspirations, her choices or her actions.

I shall also consider Patricia with regard to constraints, conversion factors and adaptation. She is a very positive and energetic woman, who suffered a stroke at the time of the life skills course in 2006. This happened when she tried to stop a fight between two young men she

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[166] Clark (2012:3) also sees the possibility of assessing high expectations as *false expectations* or as *optimism*, where people see their current situation as better than it is. I see false expectations, in the Marxist sense, as related to habituation. Optimism or over-optimism is a useful concept in this context.
[167] This grant was R1010 per month in early 2010.

knew in her street. (Her collapse did in fact stop the fight!) She was then in her mid-fifties. She recovered and this just made her more determined to attempt a large number of aspirations. She firstly wanted to have a guesthouse, for which she would renovate her house to a double storey. She also wanted to have a successful baking business, buy a *bakkie* or van, and to share her wealth by taking in homeless children. She decided that this would be a good legacy to leave her three sons, who were young adults at this stage, as it would provide them with employment and direction in life. Her capability resources were primarily her two-bedroomed house, which she had manually built with other women belonging to the Homeless People's Federation, and her strong motivation. At the same time the house was also a capability constraint, as it was stable, but not well finished. It looked shabby, with uneven plastering, uneven brickwork and no ceilings, and it created a general impression that it had not been fully completed. Patricia and her sons moved into a shack in their backyard, and proceeded to fit the house out for overseas guests.[168] In order to be able to pay for this she baked bread and muffins in her kitchen and sold it, together with other members of the catering group. This came to an end when conflict broke out between them because of how their seed money was spent, and Patricia then joined her cousin and two Someleze members, Liziwe and Thembeka in a new sewing group. She also eventually withdrew from this group as a result of group conflict. She explained that her repeated withdrawal from group conflict was because she did not want to risk her health again, and so this (realistic) fear operated as a personal conversion factor. The power issues in the group could be seen as a social conversion factor, and the context where people always lack and compete for money can possibly be seen as an environmental conversion factor. We introduced her to an architect and a travel agent who were prepared to assist her as volunteers, but although the interaction started with great energy, the architect soon confirmed our assessment that there was too much to be done on the house for the plan to be realistic. The main constraint in this case therefore proved to be the unrealistic level of Patricia's aspirations.

Can this be seen as adaptation? If we return to Teschl and Comim's definition of adaptation as "processes that prevent the free exercise of individuals' autonomous choices" (Teschl and Comim, 2005:233), one could possibly argue that Patricia did not so much make a realistic and free decision about the life she wanted to lead, as that she possibly saw the opportunity to attempt to realise her aspirations with support in the form of limited resources as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity which had to be grasped with both hands, and used to the fullest extent. In that process she targeted too many aspirations simultaneously, and even the individual aspirations were not realistic. For some reason she was not able to see the difference between what would be required and what she had, in spite of some gentle prodding. Rather however than to see this as "upward adaptation" or "upwards adjusting aspirations", as Clark (2009:23) does, Conradie and Robeyns (2013:565) prefer to call this "seemingly overambitious aspirations." This can only ever be seemingly so, as some people, such as Vicky Ntozini, managed to achieve exactly what Patricia set out to do. Furthermore, it is highly likely that Vicky set the "aspirations window" (Ray, 2003) for Patricia, who felt that if

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[168] South Africans do not often stay in township guesthouses.

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Vicky could do it, she surely should also be able to. These "overambitious aspirations" are therefore indicative of the person having targeted an unrealistic level of aspiration, due to not understanding or accepting the exact nature of the aspirations gap (Ray, 2003). In this case the difference probably lies in the fact that Vicky, as a young student, studied electrical engineering at university for a few years, and assimilated a level of general knowledge and life-skills which was required to turn her guesthouse into a stylish and welcoming place. Vicky's husband is also a skilled builder who constructed the bed and breakfast himself. Patricia presumably also had some exposure to what was needed, but not to the same extent, not with the same talent and not with the same outcomes. This assessment of what would be realistic could only be understood retrospectively, as there remained a chance that it could happen.[169]

Patricia therefore had a set of useful capability resources, and although there were constraints, they might have been surmountable. She was faced by considerable personal conversion factors in the form of bad health, by debilitating social conversion factors in the form of destructively competitive business partners, and by negative environmental conversion factors in the form of living in a poverty stricken township with a traumatic history. All of these could also be seen as capability constraints. In spite of these factors, a certain mix of agency and realistic targeting of aspirations might have brought her success, but for her specific aspiration gap she just targeted too high. When she decided to "lower the bar" and to first do catering to raise the funds she needed for the guesthouse, she was much better able to achieve her aspirations and her goals.

Nomaliso might also be seen to have aimed too high for what she was able to actually achieve. Her initial aspirations included a long list of things, including having a foster house for Aids orphans. Throughout the process she was full of ideas and could articulate them well, but just never took even the most basic actions to achieve them, even when we offered assistance. I suspect that her health condition, as somebody who has been HIV positive for about a decade, has not been good enough to support her aspirations, but also that she is inclined not be to be focussed. She remained active throughout the period, but was not pro-active, in the sense that she did not initiate activities. I therefore think that she did adapt her choices and actions.

In discussing the capability constraints, the conversion factors and the possibility of adaptive preferences of Boniswa, Patricia and Nomalisa, I attempted to illustrate the deep interconnectedness of these factors and the importance of the mutual reciprocity of factors that can constrain and limit the achievement of aspirations. There were eight women who were assessed to have been over-ambitious in their aspirations, but none who had deliberately held themselves back by means of habituation or resignation. I therefore concluded that none of the women in this study adapted their aspirations. It is possible that Nomaliso adapted her choices and actions, as she did not follow her aspirations and intentions with actions. The

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[169] There is in fact still a chance that it might happen.

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same could possibly be said of Nozuko, whose aspirations were realistic, but who did not act on them after a period of intense conflict in the group about seed money. Although there had not been adaptation of aspirations in the group, it is therefore possible that two of the women had adapted their choices and actions.

8.2 Summary

In chapter eight I used an adaptation of Robeyns's diagram of a person's capability set and context to discuss and analyse the findings of the research, and to respond to the question whether the capabilities of the participating women had increased by means of the actions they took to realise their aspirations. I concluded that in the case of 23 of the 25 women their functionings had increased, and thus their capabilities. I also concluded that none of the women had adapted their aspirations, but that two of them had possibly adapted their choices and actions.

I shall now do an assessment of the agency achievements of the six women who were selected for the case studies.

Chapter 9:

Interpretation and analysis of the agency achievements of six women

Having assessed whether 25 *Someleze* women had increased their capabilities in chapter eight, the next question is what role their own agency played in their progress. In this chapter I shall do an interpretation and analysis of the agency of six women who were selected as case studies, and who were introduced throughout the dissertation. I shall explore their agency within the context of their life histories, especially over the last few years. With this in mind I shall provide a brief life history of each woman. The question whether agency could possibly play a role in poverty alleviation in a context of entrenched poverty is an important one.

In chapter five I created a theorerical framework for this task. It will consist of the following components:

1. To investigate whether aspirations could be agency unlocking;
2. To integrate a number of social science contributions on the nature of agency and action, from those mentioned in table 3;
3. To undertake a hermeneutic agency analysis, in such a way that it would be compatible with the capability approach;
4. To assess the women's agency by means of a qualitative and hermeneutic discussion of six proposed dimensions.

These four processes will be used to analyse the agency and actions of the six women selected for the case studies. An extensive hermeneuntic analysis will be done of the agency of Vida, to illustrate the use of the theoretical framework above. The reason for selecting Vida for this comprehensive analysis is the fact that she was the one person who seemed to have overcome the odds against her, and although she is not representative of the group, her actions indicate that the possibility exists to break out of the vicious cycle of poverty and poor education. For the other five women I shall do a briefer agency assessment, not necessarily using all the elements of the framework. This qualitative exploration will include biographical material, quotations from interviews and illustrations from their lives in general. Assessment and deep description will be integrated here around the theme of agency, to ascertain whether the challenge of working on one's aspirations is agency-unlocking. The analysis will be done in an interpretive and narrative style. These five women were selected because they were very active in the programme, and because each of them represented a particular pattern of exercising agency. Francis was highly successful but has a problematic leadership style; Nella was also very successful and has a more acceptable style, but less managerial insight than Francis. Noxolo showed high agency but limitied success in her efforts to get formal employment; Nomaliso showed some but ineffective agency and Nozuko showed very little agency at all, possibly as a result of depression

The question whether aspirations are agency unlocking will be considered in the conclusion of the chapter. I shall also return to the group of 25 women whose assessment was described in chapter eight, to ask whether their aspirations had been agency-unlocking.

9.1 A comprehensive hermeneutic assessment of agency: Vida

Amongst the participating women, Vida managed the most agency achievements. Because this will facilitate the theoretical analysis of agency, I shall use her case study as the basis for a first comprehensive analysis of agency.

I shall attempt to use Vida's own words and interpretation of her experiences to increase understanding of the life and experiences of one person who attempted to "break through" the poverty trap in which she found herself. I shall also interpret her situation as I was able to observe it over eight years, between 2006 and the time of writing. Her ideas will be given in her own words, while I shall indicate when the interpretation is mine.

When Vida decided to be part of the *Someleze* research programme in 2006 she had already made up her mind to found a community care project in her house in Site C, and had started with a soup kitchen. She would therefore have taken steps to achieve her aspirations even without the *Someleze* programme. Her participation in the research nevertheless contributed to her progress. Before I discuss her agency achievements, I shall give her life history as I recorded it on 25.04.07, as it offers an opportunity to see how she engaged her agency.

Vida's life history

I grew up in the Eastern Cape near King William's Town. We were a family of nine children and I was the second, born after my eldest brother. My parents were and still are illiterate. They did not have work, but we ploughed and harvested our own food. We were poor and had no shoes to wear to school but we all went to school. My father worked but did not earn a lot. We had food, but there were times of struggle. Sometimes we only had mealie meal[170] and sugar, which we would drink. At other times we would have mealiepap and pumpkin – that was a good meal for us.

When I was a teenager my father left home to go and work in the mines. He never contacted us, but my mother accepted it. Many years later he came home one day – we were all at home, which was quite unusual, and we saw someone coming with a suitcase and a briefcase. It was him. The child which my mother was expecting when he left – she was four months pregnant – was already tall and he didn't know her at all. We forgave him and said we were glad that he was home. He brought no money, after all those years, but we said we were just glad that he was back. My mother told us afterwards that she never slept that night – she was scared that it was a spirit who would kill us all in the night - so she pinched him and when he winced, she relaxed.

By the middle of standard eight [171] I decided not to go back to school. I was doing well but I did not have the clothes and things which the other children had and felt shy. Also there

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[170] Maize meal, from which porridge can be made, called "mealiepap."
[171] The tenth year of school.

was peer pressure that said I could get a job. My parents wanted me to go back to school but I did not want to. After a while I started to look for a job and for a while I did a whole range of things. First I worked as a machinist making children's clothes – I did that for about three years. Then I decided that was not right and went home to pick up my life – I was about eighteen then. My parents again insisted that I should go back to school, but I didn't. I went to East London again and worked there till I was about 25 or 26. Then I fell pregnant and had a boy. The father of the child helped me a lot financially so I was lucky. My mother then took over the care of the baby, together with selling fruit and vegetables and beer.

My son however got meningitis and TB when he was three. He was very badly affected by it and became a cripple and couldn't see me after that. I stayed in hospital with him for a long time – many years. He had to be cared for like a baby. When he was discharged my mother took him again and sent me off to look for work. At this time I was working with a lady teacher (an African woman) in East London. At some point we had a quarrel about a tape recorder which could not be found and she accused me of taking it. She had the police arrest me and I spent three weeks in the police cells. (At this stage Vida cried for a while). It was really terrible. Then my case came up and I was found not guilty. It was such a bad experience that I went back home for a while.

Then I came to Cape Town. This is the place where everything worked out for me. For a while I worked as a domestic worker, earning about R1500 per month and sending money home. I first lived with relatives. Then I got myself a one-room shack and one day as I sat there I thought: I am going to live like this until when? I was about 30, had decided that I did not need to spend all my time with friends, and got to a point where I thought: I'll show all of you my strength. I went to Chris Hani High School in Macasa, and asked to be enrolled. At first they did not want to take me, and said I had to go to an Adult Education Centre. I said that would take too long, and asked again. They accepted me and I got so many awards that were destroyed when my house burnt down – for hard work, being neat, etc. In 1994 when I was 34 I passed matric with university exemption.

In 1997 my mother phoned and said that my child had died. I managed to get leave from my work and went home to bury him. We had a funeral policy and that helped with the expenses. When I came back I looked for another job and got one in Kloofnek. One day there were overseas guests and I told them my story. They gave me $400, and I went straight to FNB in town and exchanged it for Rands. It was enough for a university registration - I had applied to Good Hope College and to UWC but didn't have the money for registration before. Now I went directly to UWC and registered with that money. I then applied for a scholarship which everybody said I would never get, and I did. My friends said: what did you do for him to get it? I said: Nothing, I just got it. At that time I knew things were going to work and I felt optimistic. I felt that I had that power and that nothing would stop me.

That time I was studying, working at cleaning houses and I worked as a room assistant at the Mount Nelson Hotel and at other hotels. I was always running from one thing to another, always had my assignments in at the last moment, and only slept for a few hours every night for those three years. But I made it. My subjects were Politics, Xhosa and other smaller subjects. When I graduated my parents came and we rented a hall in Macasa and had such a celebration! Now I realize these were the wrong subjects for me –I should have done something like social work, to be able to help people better.

Oh yes, and when I was living alone I met my husband because he lived close by. He often came to see me when I was working so hard and would bring the supper he had cooked for us to share. I fell pregnant just before from someone else but decided it was not a good time to have a child. Because of this I didn't want to live with him – he came to me and asked if we couldn't please marry without *lobola*,[172] because he was poor but didn't want to lose me. I said no, I cannot do it that way, we'll wait. So we waited until he could pay the *lobola* and then we got married and moved into his parents' house in Site C which they then gave to us – the house which burnt down.

He is the right person for me. From the beginning he loved me so much. I have also helped him to do things, get his license and so on, so that his family who thought at first that I was after his money had to ask my pardon and said that they had been wrong. And a year after we got married we had our little daughter, Lerato. I then stopped working (my husband had got me a job in a chemist). After a while I got the job as research assistant for Stellenbosch University that I still have – I also got that through my husband. When I saw that there were many problems in Site C I met with people and asked them whether they wanted a soup kitchen. They said – don't even ask, you can start it today. For the whole of 2006 we did it with our own money, me and my husband. Only this year has there been help from donors.

I never minded the culture that says that there are things a woman cannot do. I realised I would be stuck if I did. In fact, being a woman helped. Here the women are the natural leaders. You can look around – everything that is a success in the community was done by a woman. They also disclose what they do, and do not keep secrets. I was never going to sit back and wait for others. I said to myself – this is a new democracy, I just have to make up my mind.

Vida talks about the fact that she told herself: *this is a new democracy, I just have to make up my mind.* In 1990, as the political scene changes in South Africa with the suddenness of a summer storm, she sits alone in her corrugated iron shack in Macasa, Khayelitsha, and asks herself for how long she will be a cleaner of hotel rooms and guest houses. She has the

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[172] Bridewealth.

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aspiration to be more than what she is, although she has come the route of millions of other young black women: rural poverty; an absent father who worked on the mines, and returned with nothing; dropping out of school, and an early pregnancy. She feels that democracy might bring new opportunities, and she acts: she visits the school principal of the Chris Hani School in Khayelitsha and convinces him to allow her back into the classroom at age thirty. This opportunity pays off, and creates the next aspiration: to go to university. Again she acts, applies for admission, and is ready when opportunity opens up again, with money for her registration fee.

It is not difficult to see how Vida's aspirations unlocked her agency, but what is interesting in this particular account is the role which political liberation and the general optimism after the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela played in motivating Vida. She had the moment of quiet reflection which unlocked her agency, and as she experienced success her motivation grew. She talks about being motivated by the fact that she knew "God has a meaning for my life – I am not just here to sit."[173] Although she talks about herself as not necessarily a very religious person, this sense of a calling and a purpose is very strong in her.

I shall now explore how the different dimensions for agency analysis apply to Vida's use of agency.

9.1.1 Agency dimensions
9.1.1.1 Reflective judgement

When I asked Vida what had been turning points in her life and work, she said that the life skills course which we presented in 2006, where she learnt to think strategically, had made a big difference to how she works. As seen above she had already reflected before this, and felt that this was a time when there was an opportunity for her to have a better life. Vida is an outstanding example of a person who reflects. Serious, deliberate reflection on a difficult situation, from different angles, comes to her naturally and she practices it all the time. Her husband, her friends, colleagues and the *Someleze* and ACCEDE teams regularly challenge her with questions and she is always reflective and considered in her responses. These skills were honed in her life experiences, in her academic training,[174] and in her involvement in *Someleze*. She likewise challenges others with the same questions, as for example the youth with whom she works, and also other *Someleze* members.

The fact that both Vicky and Vida had attended a university might be significant in terms of their exceptional ability to think beyond the confines of the township situation. There might

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[173] This could possibly be seen as the will-to-meaning, advocated by Frankl.

[174] Vida also attended a Freirean Training for Transformation course in 2008, where reflection is taught as an important strategy. About this she says: "Especially important was the training from TFT. Some of the skills I got there I applied to myself, the community, my family. Skills in conflict resolution, socio-economic problems, how to treat men" (Vida, 21.05.10).

have been a different way of thinking, living and aspiring which gave them an exposure which the other women in the group had not experienced.

The constant reflection which was part of the *Someleze* process between 2006 and 2010 also encouraged reflection, amongst other things by means of the different articulations of aspirations, the survey on agency achievements in 2008, and the survey on the achievement of aspirations in 2010. It therefore not only served the purpose of providing the material needed for this dissertation, but more importantly facilitated a process of self-reflection which some members such as Vida could internalise and use for their own benefit. Sen's (1985:206) emphasis on a deep reflection on what is valued and seen as "a good life"[175] as the core process with regard to agency achievement is therefore supported by the depth of Vida's reflection. Examples of how her reflection evolved over time can be seen in some of the following quotations:

"*What I want to achieve in life is a high education and for my family to have a good life, that is a luxury house. I would like to assist those who are sick in my community and to do workshops with them. I want to concentrate on the youth*" (Aspirations survey, 31.05.06).

"*If you want to do something for yourself, your family, your community, start by changing yourself before you change others. In a recent conflict about a container here in my area I realised that people can block you. You must know that, even your friends will challenge your work if it grows. For me this is a step ladder to grow*" (Agency survey, 10.06.08).

Because of how I grew up and of conditions in the community, and also because of some of my experiences, my main dream is a just society. That is the alleviation of poverty, less poverty. My own question is what it is that I am doing to bridge that gap. Am I working towards this? Even if it is just one step forward. I also want to play a role in improving the lives of Aids orphans. There might be 4 million Aids orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa, and 360 in Site C only. What do we do to take care of them? We can bring back Ubuntu,[176] although that is difficult. Where I grew up we shared what we had. That is why I now also started my NGO in the Eastern Cape. I know people there are more in Ubuntu than here, therefore we runs as a co-op there, sharing through business programmes. Here one of my dreams is if people can stand up and do things for their own benefit, rather than looking at government. People look for money, they do not want to volunteer. This is about what we want to achieve, money comes later. Then society would be more human, with less crime. Since 2006 I've figured out that it's about institutional capacity building, training, skills development. I have not yet started with that. Now my dream is to help people with skills development training, then to get jobs, or to create jobs for themselves.

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[175] "The good life" is not discussed here from a normative point of view or from the perspective of a comprehensive proposal of what a society based on the good life would look like (Robeyns, 2009:407), but simply as the valued life which an individual person would aspire to.

[176] Ubuntu: the African philosophical belief that we are what we are through each other. From this way of thinking comes the sharing of material things.

My aspirations have not really changed. Sometimes I get confused though. Then I realise I have to think about what I started with. At the end of the day I realise I have to focus. For example I now realised I have to focus on marketing, fundraising, work on the building. Nothing happens overnight, I have to focus, work on one or two things. The programmes all work together. I realised I should not do unrelated things" (Vida, 21.05.10).

From the different quotations above one can see how Vida's constant reflection process deepened her analysis of the values on which she relies and which support her idea of "a good life". She started with the idea to respond to the TB and AIDS sufferers she worked with who could not take their medication because they had to take it with good food, which they lacked, and with the idea to work with youth. She also knew that she wanted to get an even better education than her BA degree and that she also aspired to a "luxury home" for her family, which was living in a shack. By 2010 she was aware that these aspirations were secondary, and that she wanted to not only respond to the needs she perceived around her, but to play a role in changing the way society functions. She now wanted to contribute to greater social justice by creating economic skills and opportunities. She wanted to also pursue the kind of education which would make that goal possible, and she believed that the material things she needed would follow from there.[177]

9.1.1.2 Motivation

We are reminded that the proponents of Self-Determination Theory have found that extrinsic motivation is associated with the need for wealth, fame and image, while intrinsic motivation is based on three fundamental psychological needs, that for relatedness, competence and autonomy (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Ryan, 2009). It seems that there might have been a shift in Vida's motivation over the period of her involvement with *Someleze* from extrinsic motivation – a partial desire for external rewards in the form of higher education and a better house – to an emphasis on intrinsic motivation, where she says that it is not about money, but about working towards a just society. In this second phase she starts to recognise that which helps her to grow, when she realises that she needs more management skills. She then seeks greater competence through her studies, rather than just a higher qualification.

9.1.1.3 Pursuit of goals, 2006-2010

Vida's goal pursuits and achievements will be discussed in terms of strategic economic goals, management strategies, political agency and her success in the pursuit of her goals.

- **Strategic economic goals**

The most important goal pursued during this period was arguably the financial sustainability of her NGO. By linking it to international sources she managed to ensure a degree of

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[177] For the greatest part of this period Vida had worked without an income, and relied on her husband's salary to sustain the family. In addition, the NGO functioned from their corrugated iron home and there has been very little space for privacy.

financial sustainability and to break out of the tight social and economic exclusion which characterises the area, even if only in small ways.

How did she do this, in a township which was built and maintained on the basis of social and economic exclusion? Firstly there is the possibility that the 'aspirations window' (Ray, 2003) had been set for all these women by Vicky Ntozini.[178] Vicky had come from the rural Eastern Cape, like Vida and most of the other women, where they grew up in small hamlets, often without running water or electricity, with little contact with the outside world and with strong cultural norms. Both Vicky and Vida grew up so poor that they were ashamed of the clothes they wore. But as teenagers their responses differed. Vicky's mother was intent on getting her children education at every cost, and Vicky responded by working hard, getting good grades and getting a place at the University of Cape Town, with her brother as her initial sponsor. At UCT she saw people from all over the world, and she wanted to be a part of that world. When her aspirations seem to have failed, she saw the tourist buses driving through Khayelitsha and devised a way of bringing people into the small streets and the corrugated iron houses. She reached out to the tour operators to come to her house and she used her personal charisma to address the tourists who came on a daily basis, one busload after another. Many of them came back to support her guesthouse and many also supported her welfare work in the area. In this visionary way Vicky was the first person to bridge the racial divide in Cape Town tourism in a large and imaginative way, and she became justly famous for it. When she acted as peer mentor in the *Someleze* life skills course, her success set the margin for how far the women might be able to extend their aspirations window.

Vida had a different response as a teenager. She dropped out of school, in spite of her parents' disappointment, had a range of jobs and only when she was thirty, after the harrowing experience of her son's illness and disability, brought herself back to her dreams. She went to a different university from Vicky, the University of the Western Cape, which had fewer international students at that time. She nevertheless met international people in the hotels where she did cleaning, and had exposure to a bigger world. When she set up her NGO in 2006 she and her husband funded it from his salary. In the course of that year she joined the *Somaleze* project and was more personally exposed to Vicky's experience, although she had known her before. She then reached out to a number of tour operators who started to visit her NGO with international guests. From this exposure a number of international sponsors were attracted to her work. I also introduced her to a Norwegian academic who was working at the University of the Western Cape, and he still mobilises resources for her work in Norway. As with Vicky, this success is partly due to organisational skill, but largely to personal charisma. I have seen numerous people leave Vida's project after she had given an inspiring account of her work, determined to support the organisation in some way. This account would however invariably be given with some of her in-depth political analysis, as Political Science had been one of her majors at university, and so its appeal would be both intellectual and practical.

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[178] See Vicky's life history in the preface.

Vida therefore managed to put her organisation on a different track, and because she incorporated one project after another, in the form of early childcare, orphan care, nutrition, sewing, youth leadership, sport, a food garden, computer training and a choir, it grew exponentially. That however brought management problems, as will be discussed below.

- **The pursuit of managerial goals**

In a strategic planning session we arranged for Vida's NGO in 2008 she decided to leave the day-to-day work in the organisation to others and to spend her time on management and training. In the 2010 survey she said that she still saw that as her real goal, but that she has not managed to implement it yet.

As a result there are problems in her organisation.[179] International sponsors want audited accounts and tight managerial practices, which require a specific set of skills. Accountability to sponsors also requires a commitment to not doing things "the township way". Vida has now made that commitment as she sees that it is essential for the growth of her organisation, but it leaves her out of step with her immediate environment, where rules are often made and broken as they are required to be. She also uses youth volunteers from the area who gain very useful skills as interns, but who do not necessarily have the skills or the commitment to practice development management by the book. The sponsors have been relatively patient with this problem, as nobody wants to kill a lively enterprise with rules, but Vida recognises that a middle way has to be found for the sake of long-term sustainability. She is therefore enrolled for a management course at a technicon, to learn these skills herself, but the course has not been completely what she needed.

At the same time she is on the ground, in the middle of the Site C community and living and working from a corrugated iron house herself, without an income. People in the community trust her and a state department has recently asked her to manage a set of services on their behalf, as they also see her as credible. It is therefore essential that she acquires the next set of skills soon.

- **The pursuit of political goals**

Vida is part of the political life of the area. In the 2010 survey she told us that she had decided to cut back on her political activities as she was overcommitted and wanted to concentrate on her NGO work.

In the last while I became more active in politics, and was elected in different structures. I was in the Street Committee, and was elected secretary of the KDF Ward Forum. Then I felt the people were confused. I received groceries from the tourists for the soup kitchen, but the Street Committee thought: Vida is involved in this, she will bring the groceries to the Street Committee. They did not understand my different roles. I explained to them that the donations

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[179] Interview with Vida, 03.10.13.

were not related to them, that I have an NGO. I also have a company and they feel the KDF is a scapegoat for me to get tenders and donations. In our culture the way is: do not say it straight. I thought about it and decided the anger around this is not worth it. Sometimes I wanted to confront it, then people just say: no, no, no. Then I decided: what am I looking for in life? As leader I want to be firm and strong, but this might change my character. I will start fighting and shouting in front of others. Also I do not have time for my projects, I only have time for meetings. I have no time for reports. So last year I took a decision. I'm going to focus on the children, my family, the NGO. End of story. I do not want to create enemies or be a victim. The community felt they are losing support, but it's no use. Now they are crying for me to come back. I'm feeling better though. I attend the meetings like everybody else. Now I am always here, then I was never here. My decision was that I have to do what is most important. I love to be involved in the community, but if I do not take this decision, things will not be right (Vida, 21.05.10).

Because of her analytical ability and her deep knowledge of how the political structures work, she is an invaluable source to the ACCEDE team.[180] She has a deep insight into the games people play for power, as political power in the current context brings considerable resources in its wake, and is therefore doubly desirable. When the previous ward councillor left the ANC in 2007 to join COPE, a new political party formed largely by ANC members loyal to Thabo Mbeki, she joined COPE as well.[181] She is now back in the ANC, as she astutely says that any other party will have insufficient numbers to draw resources to the area (Vida, 03.10.13). Vida has therefore taken the decision that she will use political resources and infrastructure for the sake of development, but not for personal power.

- **Success in pursuit of her goals**

Sen (1984:276) says that when the success of the pursuit of goals is assessed, this deals with agency achievement. Vida has not yet done a systematic assessment of her goal achievements, and this might well be an activity which her organisation would benefit from. There are many goals which have evidently been achieved, such as the daily feeding of about one hundred needy people from her soup kitchen, who write their names on a list when they come or food, and the daily care of ten pre-schoolers in her educare facility. She has involved the youth in a way which no other organisation in the area has managed, and there are also other areas of clear goal achievement. The systematic evaluation of the work of the NGO is however exactly the kind of activity which might show that the NGO is overburdened in terms of commitments and under-provided in terms of staff. The systematic planning and evaluation of projects are some of the management processes which she is currently studying. On the whole my impression is that she and other staff and volunteers have managed to do an extraordinary amount of work since 2006 but that it would ease her work burden if there were better management systems in place. I think she also needs to learn to say no, as everybody wants to work with her, but the work load is in danger of becoming unmanageable.

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[180] We also intend to do some research with her as co-author.

[181] Many people in Site C and many members of *Someleze* supported this decision by Theresa Bottoman, the previous ward councillor, but when COPE imploded due to infighting, many of them quietly re-joined the ANC.

9.1.1.4 Autonomy

In the capability approach the concept of agency is very closely associated with autonomy Sen (1985:203). Autonomous action is used here to mean the actions which somebody undertakes in order to bring about change, and which should be judged in terms of a person's own values and objectives (Sen, 1999:19). This definition of agency fits what Vida does very well, although there are things which she does which fall outside of the broad definition – smaller day-to-day actions which are sustaining but which are not part of a plan to change things.

In the literature review we also saw that autonomy does not operate in isolation, but in close relation to other aspects of agency achievements (Ryan, 2009). Autonomy can hardly exist without reflection, as habituation and socialisation would otherwise cause the person to act in ways which she would think others would expect of her. It is clear from Vida's statements that she is reflective on customs:

Yes, we grew up with our culture. There is a stereotype that women should be at home, wash, cook, look after the children, etc. Men should work outside the home. As time goes on, you find that it changed, there is more democracy. Technology and other things made for a change to occur. My husband works with the child, and cooks. Rather than to copy our ancestor's style, we do what is right now. I'm not saying that I leave culture behind, but if this or that does not suit me, how will I benefit? Now there are female engineers, then not. There are ladies in construction and in many other jobs. If we tell ourselves: I grew up like this, this is my culture… Circumcision we need to do, but sitting as a housewife has no benefit. I can leave practicing that. There are those who do – but we need to look at how they are stumbling blocks (Vida, 21.05.10).

As will be seen below, her autonomy is also associated with her relationships, and her search for competence. The fact that she is intrinsically motivated contributes to her autonomy. More than most people, she uses her personality to arrange the activities of those around her and her intuition and reflection to decide how they will fit into her work. This intuitive process happens within the autonomous space she has created for her work.

9.1.1.5 Relatedness

Vida sees her work entirely in relation to her own environment: "*My work is completely influenced by the history of Site C, and the conditions here – they are unhealthy, socially and economically, with challenges, poverty, you name it. For me, being here is the challenge: what am I doing as a response, so I'm not just sitting?*" (21.05.10). She therefore acts with and in relation to people in the area. However, she is also careful how she does that: "*The only people I allow to be close to me are those who will help me further- I work closely with them, to learn more*" (Vida, 10.06.08).

She often talks about the support she gets from her husband. He shares his home and his life with her project, often pays for the expenses associated with it from his salary, takes care of the Aids orphans with her, and is completely supportive of her work.

Vida is a warm and loving person, and naturally draws people to her. She has a charismatic personality and a sense of humour. Together with her intellectual reflectivity, these characteristics support the work she does.

9.1.1.6 Competence

As Vida is intrinsically motivated she wants to increase her competence to achieve the goals she has set for her organisation. Gaining competence is always an incremental process in the attempt to realise aspirations, and in Vida's case she has managed to start and run a successful multi-functioning organisation staffed mainly by volunteers by using her intuitive abilities. She however needs specialised knowledge on how to put management systems in place to relieve the burden of having to veto everything herself, and to accommodate her growing organisation. For these reasons she is searching for the competence she now needs.

9.1.2 Evaluation

In this section I shall discuss a few general factors which influenced Vida's agency.

9.1.2.1 Psychological aspects

The first impression Vida makes is of an outgoing, warm person who has good relationship skills. The second impression is of an active mind, which is moving along its own path even as she is talking to you. Vida has a quick temper but says that she has learnt over the years to control it and to think first. She says that now she will think for twenty minutes what the conflict is really about, and then try to approach it rationally (Vida, 10.06.08). She is also prepared to go back to somebody and to apologise if she thinks she has not acted correctly. "I am prepared to hear if people think I was wrong- I will grow through that" (*Ibid*). She recently, in 2013, approached me to mediate in a conflict with a sponsor, and although she did not relinquish her sense of autonomy and independent decision making, she was able to meet the person halfway and to negotiate a new undertaking. She is therefore able to be flexible and open minded, while maintaining a strong sense of her own identity and purpose.

9.1.2.2 Institutions, structures and constraints

Agency is framed, facilitated or constrained by a range of institutional properties, such as social norms and cultural practices, structural conditions and political and economic power relations. Vida's perspectives on some of these factors, such as cultural practices, have been discussed above. Here these conditions will be discussed as a whole.

The institutional constraints Vida has to cope with are overwhelming. She works in an area with weak institutional infrastructure, and where these properties do exit they often do not function very well. "Passing money under the table" and other corrupt practices are rife, officials are overworked and often poorly motivated. In one case she became so frustrated

with the practices of the local officials who administer the soup kitchens in the area, and who gave preference to people from certain political parties, that she called the premier of the province, Helen Zille of the Democratic Alliance.[182] She laid her complaint and the problem was sorted out within a few days. To be able to deal successfully with the interconnected structures of government departments, civil society organisations, political party rivalry, even within parties, and the general atmosphere of mistrust and competitiveness which is found in the township, requires inside knowledge, diplomacy, astuteness, courage and perseverance. Vida is however well respected for her work. The same official who had to be coerced by the premier to include Vida's organisation on its list has now asked Vida whether she wants to take over the entire administration of government's nutrition support in the area. As this will come with a fee which will pay Vida a salary for the first time in years, she might well agree. Other officials and role players often consult her and are careful not to cross her unnecessarily.

Another example of the way in which social norms can act as a constraint was when Vida was beginning to be successful in her mobilisation of resources to support her work and other women in the township became jealous of her. One day she was given a lift by a young man she knew well and he told her that a certain person had approached him to kill somebody for a large amount of money. She recognised herself in his description, and when she told him, they both laughed about it. If things had worked out differently, this could have been a serious threat.

Dealing with institutional constraints is therefore not a linear skill which can be exercised according to a logical framework type approach, but one where experience, insider knowledge and understanding, personal charisma and abilities, judgement, political understanding and personal stature are required. This is the role which Vida fulfils very well, and where she has gained the respect of others in the community.

9.1.2.3 Freedom to achieve agency

Does Vida have the capability to achieve agency? Based on her current performance she has, but as was seen in the discussion above there are agency achievements which she still wants to pursue, and has to, if she wants her organisation to flourish. As she has proven that she has the intelligence and characteristics required for the tasks she has accomplished to date, she also has the freedom to achieve the functionings she still wants to pursue. The kinds of courses she would like to attend are available and affordable, and she would be able to negotiate her participation in such courses. Whether she would have time will depend on how she organises her work, but that is also within her reach. She therefore can be said to have the freedom to achieve her agency goals.

9.1.2.4 Conversion factors

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[182] The Western Cape falls under the national opposition party, the DA, while the majority of the voters in Khayelitsha support the ANC.

A number of conversion factors might be seen to play a role in Vida's life and work. A personal conversion factor which is very relevant at the moment is her health. She has simply worked too hard for too long, and her health is giving in. She has just had to have a procedure done on both her knees, and has been told by the doctor to lose weight. She complains that she feels exhausted and full of body pain. She lacks her usual radiant energy and is clearly burnt out.

The social conversion factors of gender and race do not work against Vida, as she has overcome these obstacles by her agency achievements. These factors might now be positive conversion factors which assist her, as many people are more inclined to support a black woman who is enterprising and successful. The derelict but changing environment of Site C as well as the whole history told here poses an environmental and contextual conversion factor for her work.

9.1.3 Discussion

Vida has turned her life around completely in the last seventeen years. Few who saw her twenty years ago would have thought this possible. By saying to herself that she could achieve more than what she had, she built her agency achievements step by step to support her ideal of first building her skills and then making a difference to the poverty around her. This work is not yet fully accomplished, and she is presently in the process of re-assessing the outcomes and redirecting her energies. In the course of working on her goals and aspirations she reflected on the social and cultural norms of her society, such as gender attitudes and other cultural practices, and took a pro-active and personal position on these. By doing this she is also helping others to do the same. Rather than seeing African women only as discriminated against, she has contributed to the creation of a space where she and others are respected for their contributions.

The fact that Vida had reached a down-and-out position seventeen years ago from which she decided to build a new life, meant that she had to do this by examining her own motivation, autonomy and goals very carefully. This conscious process had without doubt contributed to the forms her agency had taken. In Sen's terms, she took deliberate actions to bring about change as a participant in economic, social and political actions, based on her own values and objectives (Sen, 1999:19). In this, she acted from commitment, which is simultaneously other-centred agency (Sen, 1977:326-330; 1987). There are also ways in which Vida's agency has been self-interested though, and these tight differentiations which Sen makes for the purpose of the distinction between self-interest and other-oriented interest seem somewhat artificial in a qualitative analysis of this nature. Gough, McGregor and Camfield (2007:5), reporting on qualitative and quantitative wellbeing studies, have already commented that Sen's distinction between well-being as seeing a person from the perspective of her own welfare, and agency goals, which places the interests of others first, is not commonly used and that they will not use it.

If I then rather turn to agency theorisation in social theory to interpret Vida's agency achievements, Vida is undeniably a "knowledgeable agent" with the ability to interpret and

direct her own actions, as theorised by Goffman (1959), Garfinkel (1967), and Giddens (1984:4). I tend to see all of her actions as agency, rather than only those employed for goal-directed purposes (Sen, 1999:19). She is pro-active, and shapes institutional properties and structures by means of active intervention, as in the case where she called the premier to correct the problem she experience with a government department. In this way she illustrates the way in which structures are formed and shaped by agency, (Giddens, 1984:16). This action also shows that she has agency, or the capacity to act. Vida continuously engages in reflexive monitoring of action, as shown above, also in her reflection with the *Someleze* and ACCEDE researchers. In spite of this, there are conditions which she, and we too, are unaware of, and there are unintended consequences of her actions, as in the example of the threat to her life which was recounted under the influence of local norms under institutional constraints.

One can also see Vida's agency from the perspective of Habermas' theory of action. The management processes and other concrete goals which she wants to institute can be seen as instrumental or non-social agency, which is in line with way in which Sen sees resources as instrumental (Sen, 1999:39). Vida's agency lent itself to a comprehensive theoretical and practical analysis, as she has been exceptionally purposeful and successful in what she has done.

It is important to discuss the agency achievements of some of the other women to put her agency achievements into perspective.
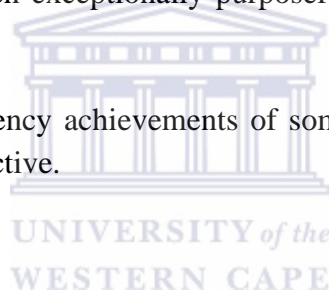
9.2 Agency achievements of five other women
Life histories

An analysis of agency achievements will now be done for five of the other women who were selected for the case studies. They are Francis, Nella, Nomaliso, Noxolo, and Nozuko. Their life histories are contained in appendix seven. For these women I shall do a description of their agency achievements, which will be done collectively, under the same headings as were used for Vida. I will then ask whether the pursuit of their aspirations was agency unlocking, and in support of this question I will do a short individual summary of the agency dimensions for each.

It is clear from the life histories that all five the women come from a background of extreme poverty. This is also true of Francis, although her father had been a rich chief. As a daughter and one of 32 children, she received no benefit from his assets, and she and her husband struggled to feed their seven children. Another common thread in the life histories is the desire of all the women to change their situation and improve the family income.

9.2.1 Agency dimensions
9.2.1.1 Reflective judgement

The way in which the women were able to reflect on the questions which we asked them in our surveys showed that all of them possess an ability to be reflective and to reason about what a valued life is. Francis responded to the question "Who are you as a person, and how is that related to what you choose to do with your life?" in her characteristic way:

"I like working with people. I am short tempered and I get very impatient with people who take long to understand things. I am a hard worker and like to immerse myself in the thing that benefits the community. I do not like to be told about something, I like to hear something first hand from the source. Working with people in communities like ours is not easy. You work with people with different personalities and characters – you work with the elderly and the young. You have to know who you are, to be confident that you can work with people, and at times you have to make decisions that will make you unpopular" (Francis, 09.04.10).

This response shows that Francis is not unaware of how she is seen, but her view is that the tasks that have to be performed are so important that feelings and popularity are secondary. I often challenged her to be more considerate of the feelings of others, and she would then smile. Her values are clear - to attend to those with the greatest need, and to be successful in her work. As a respondent in our ACCEDE research on different forms of democracy in the area, she would often be astute and observant (Francis, 17.07.09). Her capacity to reason and deliberate is therefore also well developed.

Nella's responses were also reflective, but based more on her family's experiences. In response to a question on how poverty can be changed in Khayelitsha, she said:

"I think we mustn't look for jobs, we can have these projects. There are no jobs here, especially for us as older people. Can government make a lot of jobs? No, I or my children have never had jobs. People must stand up and do something for themselves" (Nella, 10.06.08).

This reasoned conclusion based on a lifetime's harsh experience shows insight into how the South African economy works for the poor. Nella consistently put her time and energy into realising the above statement, on a daily basis.

Nomaliso's aspirations have been varied and changed from one interview to the next. She sometimes seemed uncertain how to get her old life back, before she was infected with the HIV virus. In answer to a question "Are you living the life you want to live?" she said "Yes, but not yet. I sometimes now become sick, so that I cannot live like I want to. But I am strong, and I work hard to be healthy" (13.06.08).

Noxolo experiences a lot of joy in her children and in her family, but her whole life is overshadowed by the urgency of her need to earn a proper salary. She cannot understand how it can be so hard to get work if one is keen and able to work. She learnt to be reflective from the fact that her parents were uneducated. "Because I always wanted to know 'what next?' and they could not tell me, I had to find the answers myself" (09.06.08).

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9.2.1.2 Motivation

All the women in this small group expressed the need for money as a motivation for their aspirations, but for survival, rather than for its own sake. It can therefore not be seen as extrinsic motivation. For Francis the need to do things in her own way is a primary motivation. She had previously worked for employers, but gets much more satisfaction out of planning and organising her work herself. Her motivation is therefore almost entirely intrinsic, to the degree that she is not prepared to do it in ways which would also satisfy others.

The other women's motivation was generally intrinsic, but with extrinsic elements. Noxolo's initial aspiration in 2006 was for instance "I want a good life, which would be that I own a house and support my children and others in the community. I want to own a car and things, to live an independent life" (12.02.06). As a disabled person a car would ease her life considerably, and would not only be a luxury item. For Nozuko success in being able to educate her children would also have the result that people would look up to her (12.02.06), signifying external motivation.

9.2.1.3 Goal pursuit and achievements 2006-2010
- **Economic strategies**

Collectively the women attempted to work in four groups, each focussed on a different activity. Some of these groups formed strong bonds, such as the care group. Some had continuous conflict, such as the initial sewing group and the initial catering group. None of the groups seemed to have strong cohesion as well as competence in production and/or management. The result is that many of the women in the long run decided to work on their own, and seemed more successful that way.

Francis and Nella, who are both economically active by sewing clothes and selling it, did not try to reach an international market, in contrast to Vida and Vicky. The problems with marketing in Khayelitsha are that one sells to poor customers, by and large; that there is a standard price for every kind of good, by common agreement; and that many people sell in the local market. Francis and Nella as leaders of the sewing group, as well as the women who sewed with them, were therefore faced with specific problems, and from the start I suggested to them to produce a better product and then to find an external market. This would mean good quality control and the exploration of tourist markets in Cape Town and elsewhere. To illustrate how it could work I worked through one production cycle with them, where they produced bags on order for a conference. I arranged the contract, the seed money, the training, the quality control and the delivery, while helping them to understand the steps that were taken. This worked very well and I emphasised that it was something they could repeat on their own.

They agreed with the idea but never took any steps to realise it. Firstly they did not want to take advice from Nomsa, who could have done their quality control, as she was one of them. Then, when Vicky suggested that they bring their things to her house and sell it to tourists,

they were not interested. Numerous other opportunities occurred, and they did not take action. I think that if I had offered to do the marketing that would have appealed to them, but this had not been part of our agreement. Francis then found a market in the Eastern Cape and they made tracksuits for school children. This worked well, but the division of the money caused conflict, and soon afterwards Francis decided to rather work alone. She still utilises the Eastern Cape market and does good business there. Apart from that both Francis and Nella produce for the local market, and they sell reasonably well. Profit margins are however low, and it remains a challenge to be profitable.

Nozuko joined the catering group and intended to make a living from selling bread and biscuits. We provided the group with seed funding but severe conflict erupted about how it would be spent and who would keep the provisions. Nozuko subsequently received a stove from *Someleze* but nevertheless said that she never had enough money to start. She never took any steps to bake or sell any produce.

Nomaliso did the home-based care courses and was employed by *Someleze* on a volunteer rate of R1000 per month for three years together with Sindiswa and Xola to give them an opportunity to build up a service for which we could then fundraise. They however never managed to plan and run even the most basic service beyond a soup kitchen. Nomaliso had another opportunity to attain basic security when her eldest son Lizo completed his studies. When we recorded her life history[183] in 2008 he had just been admitted to the University of the Western Cape. He knew that he had a gift for numbers, got a mentor during his undergraduate years, worked very hard, and eventually obtained good grades for his B Sc. with Mathematics and Statistics. He was then accepted into an honours degree in financial mathematics, which he is completing at the time of writing. He was also admitted to a paid internship in a large international company. He is currently able to contribute to the family's financial expenses, including the education of his siblings and his grandmother's training as a traditional healer.

Noxolo's employment history is somewhat different. After having worked in *Someleze* for a while, she realised it was not going to produce a living wage which would help her and her family. She asked *Someleze* to fund a computer course for her, and then started to apply for formal work. She eventually got a job in a factory which made electronic equipment for telephones. The hours were however very long, and Khayelitsha is secluded, with poor transport services. She often had to leave her home and her small children in the middle of the night, and as a result of her disability walking long distances was not easy either. She earned a good salary and showed me that she had food in her house for the first time ever, of which she was very proud. However, she eventually had to admit that the conditions were too strenuous, and she regretfully resigned. After that she got an internship in a human relations company, but after five months her contract was not renewed. Her husband also died in the meantime, and she is currently looking for work again. She also has a son who is a young

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[183] See appendix 7.

adult, but he has been experimenting with drugs and is not able to contribute to the family's livelihood.

This brief overview gives a sense of the difficulties the *Someleze* women are faced with in their attempts to be economically active. Noxolo, who took great pains to achieve matric, has not been able to get gainful employment, despite being registered with a number of employment agencies, and despite the fact that BEE[184] policies advantage black women, and particularly disabled black women. Nomaliso has not been able to hold down her job as a domestic helper, as it made her too tired. Her HIV+ status probably also played a role in the fact that she was not able to plan and run a sustainable care programme for *Someleze*.

Nozuko seemed to really struggle to achieve her goals of baking and selling, in spite of the fact that she received a stove. She says she still needed money to buy flour, and felt unable to make a plan to do so. Her hope is also on her children who are studying, and she is confident that they will contribute to an improvement of the family's situation. From the start this was a major part of her motivation: "I want God to strengthen me throughout my life so that I can reach my goals and dreams. I especially want to be able to educate my children" (12.02.06).

Nella and Francis both took initiative and provided leadership. Their efforts can however not be compared to those of Vicky or Vida, who had the insight that they had to extend their "market" beyond the confines of the township, even if it was based there. Francis, Nozuko, Nomaliso and Noxolo furthermore all trust that their children will be able to make a difference to the household situation when they had completed their studies.[185]

- **Political agency**

From before we met Francis in 2006, she had deliberately involved herself in political structures. She has a natural gift for planning and organising, and her skills have always been useful to different ward councillors. She would therefore assist with the planning of political events with other processes. In this way she has become deeply involved in the political life of Site C, and also serves on different political structures. She furthermore plays an active role in her own street's street committee, a political structure which falls under SANCO,[186] where she helps to ensure that the needy get attention.

Noxolo is very actively involved in welfare structures in the area, particularly those which concern the disabled. She is also a member of the board of a community radio station. Nomaliso was politically active during the liberation struggle, as a youth leader in the area, as secretary of a branch of the ANC Youth League, as a member of and earlier ANC executive for Khayelitsha and as a street committee member. Despite the negative effects of her HIV condition, she still sometimes projects herself with energy as an activist. Nozuko is an active

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[184] BEE: Black Economic Empowerment
[185] With government's NSFAS scholarship scheme people with no resources but ability are able to enter universities.
[186] SANCO: South African National Civic Organisation

member of the ANC Womens' League, where she was the secretary in 2008, and she is a member of the Khayelitsha Health Form. She is furthermore a good speaker. When *Someleze* held a certificate award ceremony for the women at the University of the Western Cape after the life skills course, Nozuko was the MC and she was excellent. In 2012 she said: "I am always busy with my organisation and I enjoy that. I am one of fifteen executives in the Women's League. I like doing things that are uplifting, that bring progress and that build" (04.09.12).

Nella is very actively involved in the Homeless People's Federation, as member and treasurer of one group in the organisation. With its deep commitment to equity in service delivery this organisation is one of the prime examples of people's movements in post-1994 South Africa (Appadurai, 2004). Nella's commitment is to working and saving until all members have brick houses.

All five the women can therefore be seen to be politically active in some way that they hope will bring improved conditions to themselves and others in the township. Their involvement ranges from participation in the local political structures which were explained in chapter two, to welfare structures, party political structures and social movements.

- **Success in the pursuit of goals**

Two out of the five women were successful in achieving their goals. Francis was probably most successful, as she secured a number of sources of income over the period, and also made considerable progress in her efforts to provide material security for the Aids orphans in her immediate environment.[187] Nella also succeeded in building up a small sewing business with moderate levels of success. For both of these women their agency was therefore strengthened by these elements of success. Noxolo, Nomaliso and Nozuko had less visible success in the achievement of the aspirations they expressed. In all of these cases agency has to be understood within the context of structural and institutional constraints, which will be discussed below.

9.2.1.4 Autonomy

All the women expressed the need for independence and autonomy. This was in fact a constant theme in the large group as well. Because they do not have sufficient money and other resources to make independent decisions, their autonomy is constantly at risk. Francis and Nella, who were most successful in their economic endeavours, experienced most autonomy, while the other three, who struggled to become financially independent, were less autonomous. In the 2010 survey Nozuko said that in 1994 she had decided that she was going to be as autonomous as if she wasn't married (25.05.10). She nevertheless really struggled to achieve her goals and at that stage there was little evidence of autonomy.

9.2.1.5 Relatedness

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[187] See table 7.

The next fundamental need to be discussed here will be that of relatedness. This element is probably most universally visible in all five the women's relationships with their children. For all of them these are probably the most significant relationships they have, except for Noxolo, who says that her whole life changed for the good when she got married. Nella is single, and Francis' husband moved to the Eastern Cape when she started to work in the housing construction business. They still work closely together on planning the family's affairs, and he does planting in the rural area, as well as selling of her sewing. Nomaliso is also single, and the partner who lived with her in 2006 has since moved out. Nozuko's marriage has been unhappy, as was seen above, but she has the ability to relate well and to be nurturing of relationships.

In *Someleze* Nella, Noxolo and Nomaliso often took responsibility for group relations and for group processes such as the creation of cohesion and conflict resolution. Francis took responsibility for task oriented goals, and after the open conflict with Patricia both Nozuko and Patricia stopped attending *Someleze* meetings. From my observation of their functionings, Nella, Noxolo and Nomaliso can be said to have good relationship skills, while Francis and Nozuko lack certain skills in this regard.

9.2.1.6 Competence

It can again be seen how closely the different elements of agency achievement are aligned in that those women who achieved most and were most autonomous also had most functionings which showed competence and abilities. If the different actions the women had taken between 2006 and 2010 are taken into account,[188] and the key outcomes are reviewed, Francis and also Nella show that they had the ability to undertake what they attempted. Noxolo undertook many actions in her attempt to get a job, and her lack of success is maybe less an indication of competence and ability, than of the difficulties for women in Khayelitsha to break out of the pattern of doing domestic work or being packers at a supermarket. Noxolo's lack of fluent spoken and written English might have played a role in this though, and this competence is also a general problem for work seekers in Khayelitsha. Nomaliso's competence lies in her personal ability to speak and to counsel, neither of which abilities can be exchanged for money without further training. Because of what might have been a period of depression for Nozuko, clear competencies have not been visible.

9.2.2 Evaluation
9.2.2.1 Structural constraints

The largest structural constraint for the women under discussion is arguably the apartheid education system which did not prepare them for a role in the South African economy. Together with the structure of the economy which does not provide for especially female workers with a poor education, these two structural problems shape the conditions which dominate the women's lives. They all want to earn an income, but are relegated to the bottom of the informal market where conditions are harsh. In Cape Town this situation is exacerbated

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[188] See table 7.

by historical politics of race, where African women from the rural area are once more at the bottom of the social order. The malfunctioning of many government offices also contributes to structural contraints.

Nella's experience is an example of how these conditions impact on many women. Her life has been shaped around her struggle to find good employment. She worked as a machinist for different companies since her mother's death, but has never earned enough from this to make a decent living out of it.[189] She also tried to work as a domestic worker, but the wage was also very low. In addition to her sewing business she therefore now has other small businesses which she runs with her children - a hair salon and a catering business, where they cook meat at night and sell it for a small amount at the door. She finds this satisfying: "You are happy when money comes in". The house that she built through the Homeless People's Federation has been an asset which she has used to help her to make an income. The fact that she cannot speak English at all is a constraint in her life and work.

9.2.2.2 Freedom to achieve agency

The question must be asked whether the five women we are discussing here have the freedom to achieve their agency goals. Vida, who lives in the same area and under the same conditions - except that her husband has paid employment as a plumber - was seen to have the capabilities to achieve her agency goals. The same does not uniformly apply to the other women.

Francis, as can be seen in table 7, has the capability to achieve her goals to be a seamstress, but not necessarily to be a fashion designer, unless she undergoes additional training. She has also proven that she has the capabilities to achieve her goals to look after the AIDS orphans in her area.

Nella also achieved her goals to establish and coordinate a small sewing cooperative. As was observed before, things change fast in the uncertain environment of Khayelitsha though, and it is not entirely certain that Nella will be able to sustain these capabilities under adverse economic conditions such as those which pertain at the moment.

Noxolo has so far not been successful in achieving her goal of getting employment. The fact that she has matric, a lot of determination and a pleasant personality should have counted in her favour. The negative economic climate has been a constraint though. The fact that she made repeated efforts which remained unsuccessful raises the question whether she had the capability of good employment (in the current situation) in the first instance. This then also raises the important question whether aspirations could be used as a proxy to assess capability. I shall argue that for certain situations it could, and I shall return to this in the concluding chapter.

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[189] As a machinest for a well-known company in the Eastern Cape she earned R8 per day in the 1980's.

In Nomaliso's case her capabilities are constrained by her health, but the success or potential success of her children would be capability assets for her and her family in future. For Nozuko there are also numerous capability constraints, as discussed above, but she can likewise see her children's education as a potential capability asset.

9.2.2.3 Conversion factors

For Francis, personal conversion factors are her high levels of energy and motivation, as well as her planning and administration skills, but these can also be negative personal and social conversion factors as she often alienates people by bluntly telling them what to do. For Nella her inability to speak or understand English is a personal and social conversion factor. In Noxolo's case her physical disability as a polio victim acts as a personal and social conversion factor, as she is personally and socially affected by it, as does Nomaliso's HIV status. Noxuko's depression can also be seen as a personal conversion factor, which also has social implications. For all of the women the resource deprived environment of poverty and sometimes of squalor acts as an environmental conversion factor.

9.2.3 Were aspirations agency unlocking?

In this section the above question will be addressed for each of the women under discussion, and supported by a summary of the findings on the agency dimensions of each.

9.2.3.1 Francis

Did Francis' aspirations unlock her agency? If one looks at the actions she undertook between 2006 and 2010[190] there can be no doubt that it happened.

Reflection: Francis is reflective and considered her goals carefully, although she is in the first place action-oriented.

Motivation: she often says: *I never give up*. She is intrinsically motivated. *I am a very determined person; if I start something I want to take it to the end. Anything is possible, there is nothing impossible for me* (Francis, 09.04.10).

Goal pursuit: More than any other member, Francis chose goals and set out to achieve them. She successfully achieved most of these goals.

Autonomy: She has a strong need for personal autonomy, possibly because she grew up in a very authoritarian culture, and also married a man who believed he should be the authority figure at home.

Relatedness: Francis can sometimes be rather brusque in interpersonal relationships, possibly as a result of the physical abuse which her mother suffered from her father, and the pain that caused her. People often see her as "bossy" which constrains her work relationships, and also her relationships in Site C. She is nevertheless respected for her organisational skills

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[190] All actions undertaken in pursuit of aspirations can be seen in table 7, column 4, from p. 199 onwards.

and her diligence. She is a leader in the area and people come to her for advice and assistance when things go wrong.

Competence: She is a reasonably good seamstress. She has excellent organisational and management skills.

It therefore seems that Francis' success can be attributed to her strong motivation and abilities to pursue her goals.

9.2.3.2 Nella:

In her case the actions she undertook in pursuit of her aspirations also indicate that her aspirations were agency unlocking. The dimensions of agency can be analysed as follows for her:

Reflection: She is reflective and insightful, in a practical way.

Motivation: Nella is highly motivated and persevered through difficult circumstances.

Goal pursuit: She remained focused on the tasks she set out to achieve, and did achieve them. She can also work strategically to achieve her goals, by choosing a strategy which she thinks can succeed and then lobbying support for it.

Autonomy: As a single woman who had never been married she is autonomous. She belongs to the Homeless People's Federation, and built her house herself. She also runs a number of small projects to ensure that her household will be financially independent.

Relatedness: Nella is a gentle but strong person who is firm about what she thinks is right, and who does not use aggression to pursue it. She is a popular leader and has good relationship skills. Three of her adult children live with her and they all seem to have good relationships with each other.

Competence: Nella is a competent seamstress and manager. She has had little formal schooling, and knows no English, which constrains her in the world of business and trade.

9.2.3.3. Nomaliso

She attended home-based care courses and worked for *Someleze* as a paid volunteer for three years. She increased her functionings but her aspirations were not focused and her actions seemed to be in pursuit of an income rather than of her aspirations. In her case her aspirations were only partly agency unlocking.

The agency dimensions for Nomaliso would be:

Reflection: Nomaliso is a very reflective person and articulates her thoughts well. She enjoys the reflection process and is aware of the fact that she is good at verbalisation.

Motivation: She appears highly motivated.

Goal pursuit: Nomaliso does not seem to be able to follow through on goal pursuit. She could do simple activities, such as running a soup kitchen twice a week, but struggled to plan and manage other activities. This might because of her HIV+ status which causes low energy levels and a vulnerability to infections.

Autonomy: She has a strong need for autonomy but is financially dependent.

Relatedness: Nomaliso has good relationship skills and is good at facilitating group relationships.

Competence: She was highly recommended for competence during her internship at Lentegeur Hospital, which was part of the home-based care course arranged for the *Someleze* members. She also speaks English reasonably well. She was a youth leader during the libration struggle and has leadership qualities.

9.2.3.4 Noxolo

Noxolo's aspirations led to a range of actions, as can be seen in table 7 on page 201. She underwent a number of training courses and put her name down for formal employment with an employment agency. By 2010 her efforts had not produced permanent employment. She had a job where she fitted machine parts in an electronics factory, and another as an HR employee, but neither of these was a permanent prospect. She however keeps trying and might yet succeed. A the time of writing she has put her name down for training as a Community Development Worker, which is in line with her original aspiration of being a social worker. In Noxolo's case her aspirations were agency unlocking.

The agency dimensions can be assessed as follows for Noxolo:
Reflection: She is highly reflective and articulate about her reflections**.**

Motivation: Noxolo is strongly and intrinsically motivated. She vowed not to give up until she has achieved what she set out to do and despite setbacks and the difficulty of walking with a stick due to polio as a child, she keeps on trying one thing after another.

Goal pursuit: Noxolo is still attempting to achieve her goals. She has achieved interim goals, such as the completion of a computer course, and the completion of her eldest son's schooling. She is determined to obtain a good job for herself and keeps trying to get it.

Autonomy: She is an autonomous person who takes her own decisions. She values her autonomy.

Relatedness: Noxolo has good relationship skills and is a problem-solver in the community. Her innate skills and relatedness draw people to her.

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Competence: She underwent her schooling in the Eastern Cape and her English is not good enough to support her aspirations. She is working on that. In other ways she is reasonably competent. She completed her schooling in Cape Town and has the formal qualification which is required for further study.

9.2.3.5 Nozuko

Nozuko attended two catering courses and so increased some functionings. She however did not apply the skills on her own and so her aspirations were not agency unlocking. It appeared that there were unknown factors which constrained her and that she found it hard to act either in the group or autonomously. She now has a daughter who is studying and she hopes that the daugher will change the family's financial situation.

Nozuko's agency assessment is:

Reflection: She is articulate and talks well. Her reflection was however quite concrete, and dealt with the need for money more than with her aspirations as such.

Motivation: Nozuko was motivated to increase her income. She however seemed depressed for long periods, and did not follow through on her intensions.

Goal pursuit: The actual pursuit of goals in the form of actions did not take place.

Autonomy: Nozuko has a need for autonomy and independence. She has however not been able to be autonomous as a result of having an abusive and alcoholic husband.

Relatedness: This is the area in which Nozuko experiences most problems, both within her family circle and in the community, where she has a reputation for causing conflict. It might be related to her having had an abusive mother ("rough", in her words) and an abusive marriage. She seems to have a close relationship with her adult daughters, and has the potential for relatedness. In the group people accepted her, but in a wary way.

Competence: Nozuko received her schooling in the rural Eastern Cape and does not speak English at all. Her competence levels do not seem to be high, except for her role in political organisations. She is for instance on the executive of the ANC Women's League in the area.

9.3 Discussion on aspirations and agency activation

In the case of four out of the six women in the case study group their aspirations unlocked agency. In all four instances there were very strong indications of agency, and a large set of deliberate and goal oriented actions which were strongly related to the articulation of and reflection on aspirations. A fifth woman, Nomaliso, is HIV positive, which acted as a personal conversion factor and constrained her actions. In her case her aspirations partly unlocked her agency. The sixth woman, Nozuko, increased some functionings but her actions did not give evidence that her aspirations had been agency unlocking.

For the group of 25 women assessed in chapter eight, the actions of all but four showed that their aspirations had been agency unlocking.[191] Two of the four were mentioned in the previous paragraph. The remaining two women are Esihle, who left Someleze to try to get a formal job, and Thozama, who was in hospital with severe TB for a long period. Both Esihle and Thozama had increased their functionings but there was no evidence that this was related to their aspirations.

There is therefore evidence that the actions undertaken by 21 out of 25 women after having reflected on their aspirations in a facilitated process were agency unlocking. From the discussion of the suggested agency dimensions it seems clear that the most central dimension in assessing whether agency had been unlocked is that of goal pursuit. In all cases where goal pursuit was successfully undertaken agency was unlocked, while the opposite also applies. The other dimensions however supported and facilitated goal pursuit. Without reflection, strong and instrisic motivation, and the need for autonomy, goal pursuit was more difficult. Relatedness seemed to have a less direct relationship to goal pursuit. Some women have strong relatedness but not strong goal pursuit, and *vice versa*. If somebody has both, such as Vida and Nella, it also supports their agency. Competency also seems related to goal pursuit, but less important. People with higher competence succeeded better at their goals, but in the final analysis the pursuit of goals seemed more significant than competence in the unlocking of agency. The activation or unlocking of agency showed most significantly in the women making repeated attempts to reach their goals, even though some of their efforts were not successful.

It has been shown that Francis, Nella and Noxolo all attempted a range of actions in order to achieve their aspirations. Francis and Nella have been generally successful in these efforts, although not invariably so, and not to the extent that Vida has been. Noxolo has better capabilities, but because her aspirations have been higher, namely to enter the formal job market, she has had less success to date. Nomaliso and Nozuko are both constrained by health conditions, but these can also change, possibly through conversion factors such as the provision of housing in Nozuko's case or a healthier phase in Nomaliso's case. The assessment of the women's situation is therefore not fixed and changes can occur through social structures and resources which become more accessible, through changed conversion factors, by means of agency, or in other ways.

9.4 Discussion of the theoretical framework used for the assessment of agency

The framework which was introduced in chapter five and in this chapter to assess agency has been applied here, in two different ways. The discussion of particularly Vida's agency was done to illustrate a comprehensive agency assessment which uses a hermeneutic and interpretative form. This analysis intends to interpret the agent from the perspective of her own life world and in her own words, and also places her agency analysis in the broader

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[191] See column 4 of table 7 on pages 199 – 203.

context within which she acted. The agency of the other women was also broadly discussed, but less comprehensively.

Secondly the analysis attempted to integrate concepts from the social sciences. Not all the concepts which appear in table three were utilised, but all of them could potentially have been used. That would however have resulted in a mechanistic and aritificial analysis, which is not what a hermeneutic and interpretative analysis intends. I therefore integrated some of the most appropriate concepts to illustrate how they can be used. There are probably many more such concepts, and the list in table three just establishes the principle that social science formulations can be integrated into an agency analysis in the capability approach as needed, within the established frame of the approach.

Thirdly I introduced a list of six agency dimensions to assess the women's agency. In the last place I was able to conlude that the aspirations of four of the women had clearly been agency unlocking.

The theoretical framework which was developed in chapter five was therefore a useful tool for this particular research, and could be used for the purpose it was designed for. The list of social science concepts was also useful although it was not utilised in a mechanistic way, but rather as an additional reservoir of knowledge which can be used when it is appropriate.

9.5 Chapter summary
In chapter nine I used the theoretical framework which was developed in chapter five for the assessment of agency. This was done in the form of one comprehensive interpretative analysis and a more general assessment of the relationship between aspirations and agency. I found that there was evidence that for 4 out of 6 women, and for 21 out of 25 women, their aspirations and the specific process used to articulate and achieve those, had been agency unlocking.

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Chapter ten
Conclusions

In this chapter I shall consider whether the research question has been answered, what new contributions this study makes, and what other conclusions can be drawn from the research. The research question in this study has been: Can deliberate attempts to realise their aspirations, with limited support, increase the capabilities of the poor? In assessing this question, I also considered a number of additional fundamental questions. Firstly, throughout the study the question was asked whether aspirations are agency unlocking. I also asked in chapter one what difference it would make to anti-poverty programmes to focus on capability enhancement. In chapter nine I asked what role agency could conceivably play in poverty reduction, particularly of people situated around the poverty line. These questions will be kept in mind in the concluding discussion.

10.1 The research question

The assessment of the women's capabilities in chapter eight shows that deliberate efforts to achieve one's aspirations can, under certain conditions, extend capabilities. These conditions were that there was a process of careful consideration of such aspirations, which included a qualitative interview in their own language, with questions that had been designed to encourage reflection and imagination. The conditions also included a commitment of realistic resources, such as equipment and training, by the researcher to assist them in thinking beyond the constraints they experienced. It further included a training course which ran over a few weeks, in which they were encouraged to reflect on social and political conditions, on their own life experiences and the personal and political meaning of those experiences, and on the reality of economic systems in South Africa. It lastly included collective reflections on their progress over a period of four years. Under these conditions, 23 out of 25 women who were assessed in 2010 increased their functionings and thus also their capabilities. The degree of their success was variable, as could be seen in table 7. Nevertheless, most households reported poverty when we began, and by 2010 most of them had improved their financial situation by engaging in economic activities of their own choice. In 2010 23 out of 25 of the women had improved their incomes and livelihoods to a point where there was upward movement.

The assessment of the increase in capabilities was supported by the theoretical thinking depicted in diagram 6 on page 176. This diagram was based on and adapted from an original diagram published by Robeyns (2005:98). I describe in chapter eight how the different concepts in the adapted diagram relate to one another. The significant aspects for the purpose of agency analysis are the understanding that agency or the capacity to act is a pre-condition for action and for the formation of aspirations; that aspiration formulation relies on judgment and then on choice; and that these can lead to action. Adaptation can occur at the time of aspiration formation, choice or action, as was shown in the agency analysis.

10.2 Upward mobility

One of the limitations of the research is that it dealt with a small sample, initially of 103 households, and by 2010 of 25 active women. There was also a lack of reliable reporting on financial income, both in the early period and later. This is however not an uncommon problem and there were other indicators that the households involved in the study were poor. Only 5% of the households reported in 2006 that they had never had too little to eat in the preceding month. Sixty percent of households had at least one reasonably stable income in 2006, but out of the 103 women themselves only 21.6% had worked for gain in the ten days before the survey was undertaken. Their main aspiration was for an income, and formal employment was very hard to obtain, even in insecure sectors. The reported income per person per month in 2006 was R315 and even if that was under-estimated, poverty was pervasive. Many women were single, and only 30% lived with their husbands or partners. For the whole group having their own income and financial independence was their main aspiration.

Through the activities which the women undertook, twenty two out of the twenty-five women had been able to increase their income base, although in some cases only marginally. Boniswa, who died in 2008, had not had the opportunity to do so, and neither did the two women who had not managed to increase their functionings. This placed them in a position where they slowly became upwardly mobile, a category described by Adato, Carter and May (2006:237) as stochastically upwardly mobile. This upward mobility enabled Francis to get four of her daughters a post-school education which ensured them employment, it assisted Nomaliso and Xola in sending their children to university to be qualified as a financial mathematician and an engineer, [192] while Liziwe could use some of her earnings as a seamstress to put money away for her three children's studies. Four of the women obtained and lost employment, but even a periodic earning is an asset which helped the household to become stochastically upwardly mobile. Even Nozuko's daughter entered a technical college, becoming a hopeful sign that the family's fortunes might change.[193] Importantly, six of the households interviewed in 2010 had obtained a formal house through the government housing scheme since 2006 to replace their shacks. These positive livelihood shocks also assisted these families. In general it therefore seems that this group of women are improving their conditions, and although they cannot be proven to be on a given income level, they are upwardly mobile. They can therefore be said to have crossed the Micawber line. This is a hopeful finding, as it means that this particular group of women is unlikely to be in a complete poverty trap (Carter and May, 1999; 2001; Adato, Carter and May, 2006).

In cases where the children of the respondents are able to study, there is the prospect that the family will eventually prosper as that person becomes established in the middle class. It obviously puts a tremendous burden on the young people who have to take responsibility for

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[192] These two young men were also assisted by Hluma Trust. They are both still studying and are successful in their studies.

[193] As reported in chapter eight, government's NSFAS scholarship scheme assists youth with no financial resources to obtain a university education.

their family in this way. The opposite phenomenon is found more often, where adult children do not leave home because that would divide the already fragmented household income (Klasen, 2007:120). In Nella's household two of her adult children are permanent members of the household, and they all in fact work together on their small businesses. In Boniswa, Hazel and Patricia's cases adult children also live at home.

10.3 Agency findings

In the agency analysis we saw that in a majority of cases, 21 out of 25 women, the pursuit of aspirations had unlocked their agency, and led them to attempt different solutions to the problem of income. The activation or unlocking of agency showed most significantly in the women making repeated attempts to reach their goals, even though some of their efforts were not successful. This is a significant conclusion, as it means that the pursuit of aspirations, under certain conditions, could play a role in overcoming entrenched poverty.

It does not follow that lack of agency is the reason for poverty – there are many structural ways to explain poverty. It means that thinking about and acting on their aspirations, together with receiving minimal support, had given the respondents the motivation they needed to engage in reasonably successful income generating activities. Agency levels differed, with some women like Vida and Francis displaying strong agency, and others less so. Nevertheless the 23 women who had increased their fuctionings all displayed some agency, and did so over a long period. Of these, two did not give evidence that aspirations had played the role of unlocking their agency. Both these women, Nomaliso and Nozuko, adapted their actions by not following through on their aspirations, Nomaliso less so than Nozuko. In Nomaliso's case, her HIV status and health condition can be seen as the conversion factor which influenced her agency at this point.

10.4 Using achieved or failed aspirations as a proxy for capability assessment

The above conclusion raises the question whether aspirations could be used as a proxy for the assessment of capability achievement in qualitative research of this kind. It is difficult to find such proxies, as it is obviously easier to assess what people have already achieved than that which they could potentially achieve. It might in any case only be possible to come to a conclusion after achieved functionings had been assessed, and one could then argue that what had been achieved had been a real opportunity from the start. It might on the other hand be easier to use aspirations as a proxy measure in the case of negative examples, where aspirations had failed. In such a case it could have been due to insufficient agency, as I argue in the case of Nozuko and Thozama, or it could be because the capability never existed. Noxolo's case might be a negative example here. She has matric, and put her name down with a number of employment agencies. She had a few temporary but not satisfying jobs, the last one consisting of putting together electronic components in mobile phones in a Chinese factory. Her salary was good, but the hours were too long for her. The fact that she lives in Khayelitsha, which is far from the industrial area, and is physically disabled, so that walking

long distances is difficult, were conversion factors which counted against her.[194] It could possibly be concluded that given the state of the economy as it is at the moment, and given the local context and her disability, that she might not have the real opportunity for the kind of work which she aspires to. In this case her aspiration for a good job might stand as proxy for her capability, or lack of it.

10.5 Aspirations and capability selection

Conradie and Robeyns (2013) further conclude that the selection and articulation of preferred aspirations can contribute to knowledge on capability selection. In Sen's version of the capability approach there is no definite list of capabilities which should be assessed, but rather the recommendation that people should select the capabilities which they value. The selection of aspirations indicates which capabilities people would value, among others.

10.6 Structural constraints

The structural constraints which impact on agency have to be taken into account and can be serious. The analysis of these constraints can also contribute to a deeper social and political analysis, particularly of unemployment, as this is arguably their biggest problem.[195] In the case of the women in this study, their collective history of being Xhosa, the colonial history and the more than four decades of racial oppression under apartheid created a particular situation where they are seen workers of the lowest rank.[196] This would be as domestic workers and care workers, or otherwise as manual workers in unprotected labour settings such as the security industry. Very often this kind of work is also extremely difficult to come by, as Kingdon and Knight (2001) conclude in their paper on why unemployment is so high in South Africa. They cite the example of a 1997 advertisement for 35 gardeners and cleaners at the University of Cape Town which elicited 35,000 responses (*Ibid*:14).

The structural constraints the women are faced with had an impact on the achievement of their aspirations. The problem of good employment and access to markets is probably the first of these contraints. Khayelitsha was built as an apartheid ghetto and is still economically and socially excluded from the rest of Cape Town. African people were historically excluded from opportunities in Cape Town and still are. Government structures do not function well and the poor are most directly affected. Pro-poor policies are urgently needed to assist those in a poverty trap in their efforts to be upwardly mobile, and to support that which they do for themselves.

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[194] She often had to leave home at three in the morning, and arrived back very late.

[195] In an ACCEDE survey in Khayelitsha on perceptions on service delivery, the first position in ranking 'the most important problem in South Africa' was given to housing, with 72% of responses. Second, at 70%, was job creation and unemployment. Respondents had to make a selection between multiple options and thus had more than one response per person (Thompson, Nleya and Africa, 2011:3-4).

[196] This obviously does not apply to the many professional people from this group, but to those who seem to be caught in a poverty trap.

10.7 The impact of cultural norms

Cultural norms and customs can also be an influence on people's ability to successfully pursue their aspirations. The group members said: "we pull each other down", and there were indeed many examples of group conflict and even of people using traditional medicines to make sure that others do not succeed. These activities are however also part of the ebb and flow of group relations, and they change as circumstances change.

10.8 Social and group conflict

I raise the question in chapter eight whether the extensive competition and mistrust which occurred in the group might have its roots in the deep psychological damage which was done by apartheid policies. This refers to the exclusion from services and priviledge on the grounds of race, and then also to the intense competition which migrants such as the Khayelitsha residents were subject to when they did come to urban areas. This is a subject that is relatively under-researched, and it would warrant further exploration, which would also assist us as a South African society in addressing it better.

10.9 More extensive use of the capability approach

Based on the conclusions above I propose that the capability approach can be useful for a qualitative analysis of this kind, and that the "tool box" could be used much more freely and generally than is the case at present. There have been many recent attempts to use this approach, as was shown in chapter three, but there is definitely much more scope for its further application. In essence the capability approach deals with a number of useful and paradigmatically important factors, namely what human beings do and what they are, and more importantly, what they can be and do. This emphasis on *real opportunities* shifts the development framework from general categories to very specific information which concerns the real person on the ground. It also makes it clear to policy makers what their task is – the creation of the most crucial, workable opportunities. In addition, it deals with agency, or what we can do ourselves. These clear and essentially simple tools have the potential to be very useful, if they are not trapped in a philosophy and methodology which is seen as too complex to use (McNeill, 2007). The complexity also has its uses, but there needs to be two levels of access to the capability approach – one which is based on these essentially simple fundamental insights, and another which would operate at a more abstract level.

Furthermore, the question was asked in chapter one what difference it would make to policy reduction to focus on capability enhancement. The high levels of commitment shown by the women over a long period suggest that the notion of responding to an *opportunity* is one that elicits high motivation, albeit in this case among already motivated women. The creation by a pro-poor government of real opportunities, which can actually be exploited, would be likely to be a successful policy approach in South Africa. It would need well functioning government institutions to support such programmes, which would be a challenge in the current situation (Terreblanche, 2012). It could nevertheless potentially influence the current destructive pattern of violent demand and reluctant response in the area of service delivery.

10.10 The Human Development framework as an alternative paradigm for development

Once the distinction discussed in the previous point has been achieved, it will also be much more feasible to popularise the approach as part of the work which is done as human development. The human development approach can potentially be a successful counterfoil for the economistic arguments and policies of the neo-liberal approach, and much has already been achieved in this regard. In my view the more extensive use of the basic ideas of the approach would ensure its popular appeal, which will nevertheless be based on a solid philosophically grounded theory, integrating some of the best insights of thinkers such as Aristotle, Smith, Marx and Sen.

10.11 Extending the social theory component of the capability approach

The theorisation of agency in the capability approach can in particular be usefully extended by the incorporation of social theoretical constructs such as the theoretical contributions of a number of social theorists such as Giddens and Habermas, as discussed in chapter four. Selective concepts devised by Bourdieu, such as *habitus*[197] and *social and cultural capital* in their original formulation,[198] can be useful too. Although I lean toward the three theorists mentioned here, there are many other social theoretical conceptualisations of agency whch can be employed in this way, depending on the particular case and context.

Agency in the capability approach can also be usefully extended by a broad hermeneutic exploration, based not only on analysis but importantly also on understanding, in the *'Verstehen'* tradition. The nature of this contribution would be that it would rely on the interpretation of the life world of the respondent, both from a subjective as well as from an objective perspective. For this purpose it uses the skills developed by the interpretative and ethnomethodology schools, in particular. This should however not be seen as a fixed outline – it is in the nature of a hermeneutical exploration that it will be open to insights from a holistic perspective.

In addition I suggested that six dimensions of agency be used for assessing agency in a qualitative agency assessment in the capability approach. These are reflective judgement, motivation and the pursuit of goals, already dimensions in use in the approach, and three additional dimensions from SDT, namely the innate pyschological needs for autonomy (also an established dimension in the capability approach), relatedness and competence. The use of these dimensions in the analysis of agency proved useful in this study.

10.12 Using the identification of adaptation for structural assessment

The analysis of adaptive preferences with reference to how realistic the articulated aspirations are in a given context can be a very useful tool for assessing the interplay between agency

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[197] The notion of *habitus* can be useful in expressing the effects of socialisation, but is has become clear that Bourdieu's original use of it was too inflexible and probably deterministic.

[198] Bourdieu's use of the term social capital was not originally associated with being an actual form of exchange, as it is now often employed, which implies a commodification of social relations (Fine, 2006). For this and other reasons some capability scholars argue against the use of human capital (and presumably also of social capital) (Robeyns, 2011c).

and institutional or structural conditions. People's pitching of aspirations as higher or lower than what they can actually and realistically achieve might be a testing of structural conditions, as much as of their own ability to achieve, willingness to risk, or awareness of possibilities. The relationship between caste and adaptation in India has been explored (Neff, 2012; Reddy and Olsen, 2012) but the exact ways in which structural conditions in a given society interact with adaptation, and might *cause* the inhibition of the capacity to aspire, still has to be researched and theorised.

10.13 New directions in cultural analysis

In an ethnographic study of this kind it is important to take note of the current trend in anthropology to (also) see culture in relation to the economy, economic opportunities and the thrust of the poor in the developing world to become upwardly mobile. In this study, Francis said in 2008 that the group aspired not to be "the poorest of the poor, but somewhere in the middle." She voiced this collective aspiration that the other women also expressed in different ways – that they want to move into the middle class, and break through the poverty trap in which they find themselves.[199] It is therefore significant that they do find themselves to be upwardly mobile at the end of the project, although it is a slow and incremental process for most of the participating women.

10.14 Limitations of the research

The limitations of the research[200] also need to be considered. The first and probably the most significant limitation of the research was the fact that I was an outsider, both in terms of the women's culture and language, and as a white researcher in a black area. I always worked with an interpreter, and as an external interpreter was not always available, the women in the group who could speak English would translate my English into isiXhosa. This meant that the translator could potentially dominate the group. I also did not always manage to understand the nuances of different situations, as much was lost in translation – both literally and in terms of customs and those unstated "codes" which people in a particular cultural group adhere to without necessarily being conscious of it. One of the women, Vida, for instance once said "Our custom is not to say things directly." That alerted me to the many ways in which things can be said, or implied, indirectly. Nevertheless, I am a South African with an understanding of the broader society into which these women are trying to fit. I have also been involved in development work and research in Khayelitsha since shortly after it was founded and in other townships in the Western Cape for more than three decades. A second limitation is linked to the fact that I made a commitment that I would find a number of resources for them, for training and equipment. This was a "noise" factor in the research, as one can never be certain whether information was given in order to obtain resources or not. On the other hand the women who only came for the resources probably did not stay long when they realised that

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[199] Researchers at the University of Stellenbosch have recently announced that the black middle class in South Africa, taken as those with an income of R25000 p. a. per capita, has grown from 10.7% of the population in 1993 to 41.3% of the population in 2012. (http://resep.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/The-emergent-SA-middle-class_.pdf - accessed 6.11.2013).

[200] This section was published in Conradie (2013: 216).

much would depend on themselves. There were limited resources, and that also acted as a partial constraint. A third and last limitation of the research is the fact that it is not possible to be certain that the women might not in any case have changed, for a different reason than having voiced and worked on their aspirations. It might for instance have been that the upgrading of the township motivated them to uplift themselves and to aspire to a more rewarding way of life. It is quite possible that some members of the younger generation, their children, will have easier access to good education and employment, thus changing the whole family situation. The women's own words nevertheless indicated that the steps they had taken had been linked directly to the voicing of their aspirations, although many indicated that the upgrading of the township had also played a major role in improving their lives.

As mentioned above, the small sample furthermore makes it difficult to generalise from the material. This has however been corrected for by means of an intensive qualitative investigation.

10.15 The value of the notion of aspirations in a developmental context
The question remains to be asked whether aspiration formation and the idea of the 'capacity to aspire' is a significant notion or merely an attractive idea. The research process and findings have shown that the women who participated in the research remained motivated by the idea of realising their aspirations, and continued to take action in this regard for four years, often under difficult conditions. It also shows that most of them eventually did enough to escape a poverty trap, by becoming (slowly) upwardly mobile. It is however not clear to what extent this kind of project could be replicated on a larger scale, and what the associated problems might be. More research might be needed to discover ways in which this idea can be successfully operationalised in larger-scale anti-poverty programmes. The fact that the women were self-selected meant that they were already motivated when we started, and to use this idea with people who are not motivated might have less impact. To simply transpose the idea of operationalising the 'capacity to aspire' to large-scale programmes would probably also not do justice to Appadurai's intentions. I would rather recommend that the notion of aspirations be seen as one aspect of a complex compendium of motivation that the poor are subject to, like the rest of society, and that the emphasis of practical applications should rather be on motivation as a category than on aspirations as a "tool".

10.16 Original contributions
There are a number of original contributions in the dissertation. Firstly there is the empirical exploration of the idea of the "capacity to aspire" among the poor in an action research programme. Secondly there has been the assessment of the functionings and capabilities of the participating women, as illustrated by means of the diagram adapted from Robeyns (2005:98). This adapted diagram includes a number of original contributions, as discussed in point 10.1 above. A third contribution is the hermeneutic analysis of agency within the framework of the capability approach, particularly with material incorporated from social theory sources. This provides an opportunity to strengthen the social analysis in the capability approach and could also contribute to the increased incorporation of conceptual material from social theory and sociology into the capability approach. The research also created the

opportunity to observe a small qualitative research sample that provided the opportunity to make observations on whether and how agency can contribute to upward mobility among the urban poor in South Africa. Finally there is a contribution to the theorisation of the relationship between aspirations and capabilities.

10.17 Final comment

Finally, it seems clear that the group of people who participated in this study have not lost the capacity to aspire. They were however self-selected, and therefore not representative. From other research in Khayelitsha (Conradie, 1991; Thompson and Conradie, 2011b) and elsewhere in South Africa (ReSEP, 2013; Clark and Qizilbash, 2008; Clark, 2003, Carter and May, 2001) it seems that South Africans are aware of the possibility of escaping poverty, and are attempting different strategies to do so, with varied success. Understanding and supporting this process must be a priority for scholars and policy makers.

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Appendix 1: General survey and aspirations survey, with instructions to interviewers

Start with the Khayelitsha survey, p 1 – 4. Emphasize that the whole survey is confidential

Then do this survey. Write verbatim notes (everything she says) in your writing pad, next to the number of the question. Introduce this by saying: This is about goals or dreams that you have for yourself. Just relax, and say what comes into your mind. Here there are no right and wrong answers. You may say anything.

1. What would "a good life" be for you?
2. Imagine that you have a birthday many years from now. You have had a good life. Your family and the community have come together to celebrate your birthday and your achievements. You also feel very happy and thankful that things have worked out so well for you. What is it that you have achieved? What is it that you see in your life when you look back?
3. How does this picture of a good life when you look back compare to your life now?
4. What are the things you would like to do in the next few years?
5. How would it change your life if you did them?
6. What have you done so far to try to achieve these things?
7. What has worked, and what has not?
8. Why did some things go wrong?
9. What do you need to be able to do the things you want to do?
10. What could make it difficult for you?
11. What choices must you make to be able to do the things you want to do?
12. What are your fears about achieving the things you want to?
13. What are your gifts – what are the things you can do really well?
14. What are the things you struggle to do – your own weaknesses?
15. Do women in Khayelitsha have problems with violence? Do you have problems with violence?
16. Can you decide yourself how you spend your money?
17. How does living in Site C make life easier or more difficult for you? Why?
18. How does living in the new South Africa make it easier or more difficult for you? Why?
19. How does being a woman affect working on your aspirations? Why?
20. How can (the things you take from, accept in) your own culture make it easier or more difficult for you to do what you want to do?
21. How does your faith make things more difficult or easier for you?
22. If you could have one thing different in your life, what would you choose?
23. How do you feel, having spoken about your dreams?
24. Is there anything else you would like to say, before we go on?

Then continue with Khayelitsha questionnaire

Appendix 2: Life skills training programme, phase 3.

Group formation
River of life
- Who am I?
- Learning from my journey
- Learning from others

What skills do they want?
Divide into 3 groups

Women and

- **Race**
- **Gender**
- **Culture**

Learning contract

Who am I?

Strengths

Growth areas

Self-confidence

My values

My vision for my life

Different scenarios

Evaluation of part 1

How do **economics and politics** work?

Problem-solving

Countering prejudice and discrimination

Networking

Finding and working with resources

Planning for my own programme

Evaluation

UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE

Appendix 3: Questionnaire: agency survey.

Name:
1. How can poverty be changed in Site C?

2. What can you do about this?

3. What are you already doing?

4. What do ordinary people need to do to get out of poverty?

5. What qualities do you have that make you a leader?

6. Tell me about your personality, how you understand yourself.

7. What was it in your personal history that helped you to develop these qualities? Were there any turning points? How did these influence you?

8. How do you respond when confronted with a problem in the community?

9. How does your husband or partner respond when you are working with problems?

10. Where do you get your own strength from?

11. Who are the people in your life that helped you to be what you are?

12. What do you find difficult to deal with?

13. Which qualities in yourself do you still need to develop?

14. Tell me about when you had to deal with a difficult situation recently.

15. What political roles do you play in the township?

16. Are you free to make any choices you wish in your own life? When and when not?

17. Are you living the life you want to live?

18. Anything else you want to say?

Appendix 4: Aspirations questionnaire. April/May 2010

Name:

Interviewer:

Recorder:

Date and time:

Address of interviewee

Cell no:

Please be as honest as possible. We want to know what you really think. Your answers can only be useful to yourself and to us if they are what you really think.

9   What is it that you want to achieve with your life? What are your life dreams and aspirations?
10   Can you remember what you said when we started in 2006?
11   How do your views on what you want to do differ now, and why?
12   What have you done on your aspirations in the last four years since we began this process?
13   How do you feel about these dreams and aspirations of yours?
14   Do your aspirations change as you work on them?
15   Who are you as a person, on a deeper level? Is that related to what you choose to do with your life? How?
16   What is good for you about having aspirations and dreams?
17   And what is not so good?
18   Can you achieve your own ideals within your own culture? How?
19   Who do you feel should help you with realising your aspirations, that is, who has a responsibility to help you with realising your aspirations, and why? Have these people or organisations helped you so far in your life, and if so, how? Did some other people or organisations help you – how?
20   What do you think should government still do for you personally? Why should it do this?
21   Which important choices and decisions did you make in the last four years?
22   Are these different from the choices you made before the Somaleze programme?
23   How are your aspirations influenced by the fact that you are a woman?
24   And how are they influenced by your being a woman living in Khayelitsha?
25   Would it have been different if you had been an Afrikaans or English speaking woman in Cape Town? How?
26   What are the deepest limitations to what you want to achieve?
27   Have people you know tried to prevent you from doing what you want to do? How, and why? What can you do about it?
28   What is it about your life as it is that you value?
29   What do you deeply value that you cannot have in your life?

30 When you look back at the end of your life, what is it that you would like to see?
31 What else would you like to tell us?
32 Do you want to work with Somaleze in the future?

Follow-up on initial survey, 2006

1. How does your household differ from how it was in 2006?
2. Do you live in the same house or in a different one? What is your (new) address?
3. How does the house differ from the one you had before?
4. How do services differ form 2006 – water, electricity and having a toilet
5. How many people in your house receive grants? Who are they, and how much is this per month?
6. How important is this income for your monthly budget?
7. Has anything else changed in your financial position since 2006? (More people having jobs, more grants, other income or progress)
8. Is life easier or more difficult than when we started in 2006? Why?
9. If you think about the following organisations/structures, how would you grade them in terms of representing the needs/interests of your community in government?

1 (Poor)   2(Moderate)   3(Good)   4(Excellent)

NGOs, for example Philani
CBO, for example Umgalelo
Khayelitsha Community
Development Forum
Sanco
Political party, councillor
Religious leader
Street committee

Appendix 5: Qualitative interview 2012

The questions we are asking this time are to help us to understand how people come to the urban area, and how rural and urban people keep in touch. We will not use your name when we write about this, but will only talk about trends that we discover. It will help us if you can tell us as much as you can. Thanks for your help!

1. Where were you born and where did you grow up? Please tell us about your family, the home you come from and your schooling.
2. Are some of your family members still at that home where you grew up?
3. Please tell us how you decided to come to Cape Town, and how it happened.
4. How was Cape Town for you when you arrived? Did you ever consider going back?
5. Do you and your rural family members help each other? How? Do you also help each other financially? Do you do so regularly or just sometimes? Can you tell us specifically how this happens?
6. Did your children ever stay in the rural area while you were in Cape Town? Please tell us specifically how this happened.
7. What do you think about the schools in Cape Town and in the Eastern Cape?
8. How often do you go to the Eastern Cape?
9. What do you like and enjoy when you now go to the Eastern Cape for a short time?
10. What do you not like and enjoy?
11. What traditional ceremonies do you attend in the Eastern Cape? Can you tell us about it?
12. How would you tell a stranger about the Eastern Cape?
13. If you go back to live in the Eastern Cape, what would you like to change about the way you live there?

14. You joined this programme in 2006. Please tell us how it has been for you over the six years.
15. Has your income increased as you worked on your aspirations? If it did, a little or a lot?
16. Has your happiness increased as you worked on your aspirations? Why? Tell us as much as you can.
17. Do you see progress in your life since 2006? Please tell us exactly how this happened or did not happen.
18. What new opportunities do you see in your life since you started to think about your aspirations?

Appendix 6: Consent form in Xhosa and English

IFOMU YEMVUMELWANO KWIPROJEKI YOPHANDO

ISIHLOKO SEPROJEKTHI: Izakhono zobomi ezingundoqo kuphuhliso: ezijongene
nabantu abahluphekileyo eKhayelitsha

UMPHATHI WEPROJEKTHI: Prof. Pieter le Roux, Director ISD, UWC

> Injongo yale projekthi kukwenza uphando ngamakhosikazi angasebenziyo enabantu abaxhomekeke kubo eKhayelitsha, sifuna ukuqulunqa izakhono zobomi ngendlela ezintathu ezinobuchwephesha ukufezekisa imfuno ezibalulekileyo, ukuze kujongwe ukuba obubuchwephesha buyasebenza ekuncedeni amakhosikazi ukuba enze utshintsho ebomini babo.

Uyayazi okokuba ithetha ntoni kuwe ukutha inxhaxheba
kwakho kolu phando?   Ewe/Hayi

Ingaba ufumene impendulo eyanelisekileyo kuyo yonke
imibuzo onayo?   Ewe/Hayi

Ukuba ufuna ulwazi ngoluphando nceda xela
isiholoko...

Uthethe nabani?   Dr/Mr/Ms.................................

Uyaqonda na ukuba ukuthatha inxhaxheba kuyi
Ntando yakho oko?   Ewe/Hayi

Uyayazi okokuba unako ukurhoxa Kolu phando?
- Nangaliphi ixesha
- Awunyanzelekanga ukunika isizathu?   Ewe/Hayi
- Uyavuma ukuthabatha inxhaxheba koluphando?   Ewe/Hayi

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

TITLE OF   Life-skills as a key to development: addressing the
PROJECT: aspirations of poor women in Khayelitsha

PROJECT LEADER:

Prof Pieter le Roux, Director ISD, UWC

> The aim of this project is to undertake a research study among unemployed women with dependents in Khayelitsha, building life-skills by means of three different intervention strategies in order to realise their most significant aspirations, and assessing the relative

effectiveness of the three strategies in helping the women to effect change in their own lives. The different interventions will be undertaken with three different groups of 20 women each, and will comprise of:

A: Running a capacity building programme with a set content
B: Doing an action-reflection intervention
C: Introducing a peer mentor

'

	Please cross out as necessary
Do you understand what it means for you to take part in this study?	YES/NO
Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?	YES/NO
Have you received enough information about this study?	YES/NO
If you require further information about the study, please indicate the topic.	………………………………………….
Who have you spoken to?	Dr/Mr/Ms……………………………….
Do you understand that your participation in this study is voluntary?	YES/NO
Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study:	
• At any time	
• Without having to give a reason for withdrawing?	YES/NO
Do you agree to take part in this study?	YES/NO

Interviewee

…………………………………………
NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS

…………………………………………
SIGNATURE

…………………….
DATE

Researcher

…………………………………………
NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS

…………………………………………
SIGNATURE

…………………….
DATE

consentformJa05

Appendix 7: Life histories of Francis, Nella, Nomaliso, Noxolo and Nozuko

Francis' Life History.[201]

I am from the Eastern Cape, from a village near Umtata. I was born in 1957. My father had 5 wives, and my mother was the third one. She had been an orphan and got married to get a better life, but it did not work like that for her. We were 9 children from my mother, of which I was the youngest, and my father's children were 32 in all. Of the 9 children of my mother there are still three left. Three of my brothers and three of my sisters died of Aids. My father was rich. He had 300 cattle and 8000 sheep. He was a good farmer in that time. He never went to school. All of us children went to school. My big brother became a translator, my one sister a nurse and another one a teacher. I dropped out of school in grade 11. Nobody in those days knew the importance of education – to read and write was good enough.

I got married in 1974 when I was 17 or 18. We struggled. Sometimes my husband worked and sometimes he did not. He stayed in the Western Cape because work was easier to get here. In 1977 I came to Cape Town. Since then I tried to be a breadwinner. I saw a different life in the urban area, compared to the rural area, so I brought all my children here. I have six daughters and a boy. Here there is better education, but in the rural area you know about working the land, slaughtering, your traditions, and people are close. We stayed here, trying to get a better life.

During this time I also worked for myself. In 2002 I got training in Home Based Care, but there was no work after the training. I also had a 6 weeks sewing training at Triple Trust, and machines and material was promised, but that never came. I met a social worker who helped me to sell my beadwork at the German school, and that I did for a long time. (I made Aids logos in beads). I also know someone at the Waterfront and she sold my things for many years. My husband and I have had many difficulties. There was always the struggle to feed everyone and send them to school. When my sister died her children also depended on me. Also, I have been in a bad car accident where the four other people in the car died and I had bad head injuries. Later I had a cancer scare. Always my prayer has been to have my own business, even today. I like sewing, and I want to work for my children.

PS: In the intervening years Francis received a government house, built up her sewing business, served as a contractor for the government's housing scheme and also for a public works scheme to improve the roads, and generally improved her family's situation. During the last two years she was the chairperson of the street committee, a local civic organisation which all households in the area belong to, and started to ensure that the AIDS orphans in that area were cared for properly.

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[201] This was recorded by me on 10.06.08.

9.6.1.2 Nella's Life History[202]

I was one of four children, the youngest. One died, so we were three that grew up together. My mother lived in a village near Mount Fletcher in the Eastern Cape. She had a disease of the muscles called *Hlepere Umjanjane*, and got a disability grant. My father left her for another woman, so I never knew him – I saw him when I was very small. Later he passed away. My mother brought us up.My older sisters got married, and then in 1975 my mother passed away. I had 8 children of which six survived, but I never got married. When my mother died I sent my son to my sisters and their families and I moved to a town in the Eastern Cape, where I worked for a well-known textile company. I worked on the overlocker and in the cutting room and earned R8 per week. My two eldest daughters went to school in B and started with grade 4. The R8 was not enough for us and so in 1986 I came to Site C. Here we stayed in a tent, later in a shack. Here I did domestic work, but the money was too little. My daughter was asked to work in a hair salon in Khayelitsha, so then there was money coming in.

One day my daughter came back from work and said that we should start our own hair salon. This was in 1987. I borrowed R200 from my neighbour for equipment and we started. At first it was very small, then the business grew. In 1996 my son opened a new salon in the next street where he worked with a group of ladies. This was on a residential site however, and when they had to demolish the house he came to my house. I'm still working in the salon, in my son's team. My fear is to make it bigger. Why I'm working with the sewing group is that my children are enough for the salon, and I'm old enough for another option now.

I have a nice big brick house now. In 1993 I joined the Homeless People's Federation. In 1997 we built this house as a sample house, also made the bricks for it. In the federation we saved a lot – R10 per week, R40 per month. Today I'm still attending the federation meetings and saving. I am the treasurer of the Noxolo group. Some of the things in my house are from the savings. We have two accounts there, one with R35,000 and one with R30,000. I wish all the members of that group must have houses – that's why I attend. I also have 8 grandchildren.

Nomaliso's life history:[203]

I am a 37 year old single mother of three children. Lizo, my firstborn son, is 18 and a first year student at the UWC. His father married and did not support him. K. is 11 and his father died and he gets a small monthly grant. The youngest is A, a girl, and she is 4 years old. Her farther seldom supports her financially. I am responsible for caring for the three children on my own.

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[202] Recorded by Pamela Tsolekile on 10.06.08
[203] Recorded by Pamela Tstolekile, 12.06.08

I do not have a full-time job, but work as a domestic servant twice a week. I am proud that I manage to be independent. My dream is to educate my children and to remain independent. I feel that what would help me in this is a computer course. With such a qualification I will be in a better position to find full-time employment. I have overcome many difficulties in my life. Five years ago, my partner became very sick and he told me that he was dying of Aids. This was a terrible shock and I lay crying on my bed for days. The thought of my children and their future got me out of this state and going again. I went to Umthawelanga, an NGO working with HIV infected people, and got good counselling and support. After the test at the clinic, the counsellor went home with me and explained to my family about the illness. My mother was and still is very supportive. Since November 2006 I have been taking ARV and I am feeling much better. At present I have TB. For the first two months I had to go to the clinic every day but now I am given a supply of medicine for a week. I never stopped working during this time even though I was feeling very weak. I was and still am very open about my status and a turning point for me was the realisation that HIV is not controlling my life.

Last year I also did the Personal Growth course with Life Line as well as the Counselling Skills Course, but I was not selected as counsellor. I have always been very active in my community in the ANC and in the Youth League and Street committees.

Noxolo's Life history[204]

I was born in 1970, I think. I once looked for my birth date in my father's diary, and it said 1970, but I am not sure. My parents were both uneducated, but my father could write. I was born in the Eastern Cape. My father worked in Cape Town, maybe as a petrol attendant, and he stayed in Langa when there was influx control. Then my mother came with us five children, and we then stayed together in Nyanga-East. My father was a good man, but did not speak to his children. When he wanted us to know something, he asked my mother to tell us.

When I started to walk I got sick, and could no longer walk. I had to stay in the hospital for many years, as that was when my polio started. When I was between 6 and 8 we went back to the Eastern Cape. My parents had to do some traditional ceremonies for me, like the cutting off of the end of my small finger. We then lived there for a long time. We were very poor as my parents did not work.

I came back to Cape Town in 1989. I was in Standard nine then. Life was very hard. It was very hard to make my matric. Because my school principal in the Eastern Cape sent me to the social workers I had a disability grant, which supported the whole family. So I decided to come to Cape Town, where my brother was working. My mother would draw my disability grant in the Eastern Cape and send (part of) it to me by the bus driver. Then I stayed with my sister. In 1992 my son L was born, while I was in st 9. Then I went back to school in 1994. I passed St 10 in 1998. I did this in the "finishing school", Ikamvalethu, in Langa.

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[204] Recorded by Pamela Tsolekile on 12.06.08.

In the meantime my elder sister was married, but her husband did not want her. Her eldest daughter was living with my mother, but there were so many difficulties, so she sent her to me. My mother also sent my youngest sister and her child to me. I had to look after everybody with my disability grant. This was 1995. It was very, very difficult. I then decided to get my grant in Cape Town, so I reapplied here. L's father then decided to leave me, and I was all alone. Then I met my husband. I lived with him, and he was good to me. After a while there was a big problem, he left me to marry another woman, hoo, but he came back again and then in 1996 he said he wanted to marry me. We got married and a new life started for me. Marriage was very exciting. My second born came in 1999, and life was nice. Then my third child came in 2005, the little one. From 2003 till now things changed and became difficult, but we support each other, do things together. I have not worked since matric.

In 2006 I met Ina. I told myself – my dreams will come true. The difficulties in my life were caused by the fact that nobody in my home worked. My parents told me not to marry because I am disabled. They said they would send the police if a man came for me. The big turning point in my life was my marriage – it changed my life.

Nozuko's Life History[205]

I was born in the Eastern Cape in 1962. I am from a poor family. My father worked for Escom, in Cape Town, and lived in Nyanga. He always came home in December, and bought us seven children clothes. He would go to McClear to buy our clothes. We would ask for a school uniform, school shoes, a Christmas dress and Christmas shoes. He would say we can choose between Christmas shoes or school shoes – of course we needed school shoes, so we never got our takkies.

We all ate from one dish. When we are finished, we don't even ask what to do, we just walk to fetch water. If we don't, there is punishment. What kind of punishment? My parents would hang up cow hide to dry and stretch, and then cut those strips – riempies. We would be hit with that. My grandmother was also strict. On Saturday and Sunday my older sisters did everything. We never really attended cultural things, more church things. I learnt to be in the house. My mother also taught me to be careful of friends – they can turn you against your family.

When I was 16 I was married. (Her husband is about 20 years older than she is.) Then the next year my first daughter was born. This child was later diagnosed with asthma. When the child was two I took her to my mother in the rural area and came back to my husband. Six years later my second daughter was born, and was ok. The third child was born in 1994 – the only boy. I went to Mt Fletcher to have this child in the hospital there and only came back when he was one month old. In 1998 I had my last child, a daughter.

My husband was retrenched in 1995 and so now no one was working. When I was five months pregnant I sat down and thought: how will we do this with no income? I then decided to talk to the doctor about sterilisation. After the baby was born I did ask him, through a translator, and he asked if I had told my husband. I replied that it was the woman who carried the child and felt the pain. It was very difficult with nobody working. The child

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[205] Recorded by Pamela Tsolekile on 12.06.08.

support grants helped a lot. I then also got a contract from Social Development which came to an end again. Then Somaleze started.

ISD, UWC: Khayelitsha Survey. 2006

Taken from Khayelitsha Panel Survey

A.6	Full Name		
A.7	Gender	(Male=1 ; Female =2)	
A.8	Current Address		
A.9	Community/Suburb		
A.10	Postal Code		
A.11	Work phone:		
A.12	Home phone:		
A.13	Cell phone		
A.14	Email		
A.15	Age: How old are you now?		
A.16.1	What is your date of birth?	DAY (1-31)	
A.16.2		MONTH (for example jan, feb)	
A.16.2		YEAR (for example 1985,1987)	
A.17.1	Date of interview	DAY (1-31)	
A.17.2		MONTH (for example may, aug)	
A.18	Interviewer name		

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

TITLE OF PROJECT: Life-skills as a key to development

PROJECT LEADER:

Prof Pieter le Roux, Director ISD, UWC

- The programme is for women in Khayelitsha who wish to work on their own dreams
- First we'll have an interview with them
- Then they will be in life-skills groups for 8 weeks on a Wednesday morning
- They will also be helped to find organizations which can help them
- The programme will run for about 2 years

	Please cross out as necessary
Do you understand what it means for you to take part in this study?	YES/NO
Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?	YES/NO
Have you received enough information about this study?	YES/NO
If you require further information about the study, please indicate the topic.	....
Who have you spoken to?	Ms...................................
Do you understand that your participation in this study is voluntary?	YES/NO
Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study: • At any time	
• Without having to give a reason for withdrawing?	YES/NO
Do you agree to take part in this study?	YES/NO
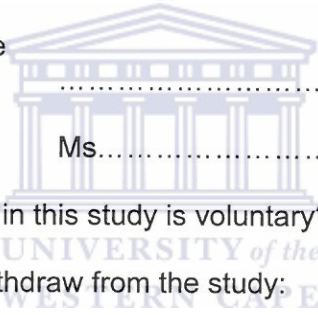
Interviewee

....
NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS   SIGNATURE   DATE

Researcher/Interviewer

....
NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS   SIGNATURE   DATE

consentformJa05

Household roster

Government Grants

Does — receive any of the following government grants? Put a circle for each grant received.
(For child grants, put a circle in the line for the parent or caretaker who receives the grant. Then put a circle in the line of the child who the grant is for)

B.1 Line #	B.3 Name — Make the head of the household number 1. Then give all other members of the household	B.6 Year	B.7 Age	B.8 Sex (1=M 2=F)	B.11 How is interviewee related to the head of household (Code B11)	B.12 How is — related to the respondent (Code B12)	B.13 Marital Status (1=Never married or living with partner 2=Married 3=Not married but living with partner 4=Divorced/separated 5=Widowed 6=Too young 99=Don't know) (Code)	B.15.1 State old-age pension? (Circle)	B.15.2 Child Support Grant? (circle parent) (Circle)	B.15.3 Child Support Grant? (circle child) (Circle)	B.15.4 Disability grant? (Circle)	B.15.5 Child foster care grant? (circle parent) (Circle)	B.15.6 Child foster care grant? (circle child) (Circle)	B.15.7 No grants (Circle)
B.2														
skip														
1								1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2					X			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3					X			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4					X			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5					X			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6					X			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7					X			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8					X			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9					X			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10					X			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11					X			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12					X			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13					X			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14					X			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15					X			1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Module B: Household roster (part 3A)

Module B: (part 3B)

Health

Line #	How is the health of interviewee? 1=Poor 2=Fair 3=Good 4=Very Good 5=Excellent	Show health condition card: Has she had any of these health conditions in the last 12 months **Enter up to 3 conditions**			Has she visited a doctor or a clinic in the past month?	Has she visited a healer in the past month?	Has she spent the night in a hospital in the past month?
B.1	B.16	B.17	B.18	B.19	B.20	B.21	B.22
	Code	Code B17,B18,B19			1=yes 2=no 99=don't know		
1							

Module B: Household roster (part 4)
Employment

Line #	Did you work for pay or family gain in last 7 days? 1=Yes 2=No 98=Refuse 99=Don't know	If yes to B.27: In the last month, about how much was your total pay for all work 99998=Refuse 99999=Don't know	If no to B.27: If not working: did you look for work in the last 7 days?	If no to B.29: If not looking for work: do you want work?	If yes to B.27: What kind of work do you do in his/her main current job? (Write down occupation or job title. Record at least two words such as: Car salesperson, Office cleaner, Vegetable farmer, Primary school teacher, etc.)	If yes to B.27: What is the main business at ---'s place of work in his/her main job? (Write the main industry, economic activity, product or service of the employer or company, such as: road construction, supermarket, police service, hairdressing, banking, OR activity of person if self-employed.)
B.1	B.27	B.28	B.29	B.30	B.31	B.32
		Rands	1=yes 2=no 99=don't know		At least two words	At least two words
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

Module B: Household roster (part 5)

Schooling

Line #	ASK FOR ALL:	ASK IF AGE 7-25		
	What is the highest schooling level completed	Is — enrolled in school, technikon, university, or other educational institution in 2006? 1=Yes, 2=No 99999=Don't know	If yes to B.34: What level of schooling or training?	If no to B.34: If not currently enrolled, why not?
B.1	**B.33**	**B.34**	**B.35**	**B.36**
	Code B33		Code B35	Code B36
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

Module C. Household Characteristics

				GO TO
C.1 (C.1 CAPS 2005)	**INTERVIEWER: Record main material used for the walls of this residence.** **ONE MENTION ONLY.**	Traditional materials (mud, brick, duka)	1	
		Temporary shack (plastic, cardboard, plywood)	2	
		Permanent shack (corrugated iron, mixed brick)	3	
		Permanent building (brick, block)	4	
		Other (SPECIFY):	5	
C.2 (C.3 CAPS 2005)	What is the **main** language of residents in this household? **INTERVIEWER: CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE ONLY.**	English	1	
		Xhosa	2	
		Afrikaans	3	
		Other (SPECIFY):	4	
C.3 (C.4 CAPS 2005)	How many **rooms** are in this residence? Include bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens, lounges dining rooms as well as backyard shacks if they are part of the household. Exclude bathrooms, toilets and passages.	Number of Rooms		
C.4 (C.5 CAPS 2005)	Does the family own or rent this residence? **ONE MENTION ONLY.**	Own	1	
		Rent	2	
		Other (SPECIFY):	3	
		Don't know	99	
C.5 (C.1 1 CAPS 2005)	Is this residence connected to an electricity supply?	Yes	1	
		No	2	

We would now like to ask you some questions about the things household members own. We will use this information to compare households in our study. Some of these things may not apply to you, but we need to ask these questions in all the places in which we are working.

INTERVIEWER: ASSURE RESPONDENT THAT THE INFORMATION IS CONFIDENTIAL.

Does anyone in this household **own** the following items …? (Only mention items that are working)

(Ask about each item on the list. Circle 1 for yes or 2 for no)

(C6-C.19 taken from C.13-C.26 CAPS 2005)	Yes=1	No=2	Refused=98	Don't know=99
C.6 Radio, stereo or cassette recorder	1	2	98	99
C.7 Television	1	2	98	99
C.8 Video, VCR, DVD	1	2	98	99
C.9 Telephone (not cellular)	1	2	98	99
C.10 Cellular telephone	1	2	98	99
C.11 Refrigerator/freezer	1	2	98	99
C.12 Gas/electric stove	1	2	98	99
C.13 Microwave	1	2	98	99
C.14 Washing machine	1	2	98	99
C.15 Bicycle	1	2	98	99
C.16 Motorcycle	1	2	98	99
C.17 Car, Bakki or Combi	1	2	98	99
C.18 Computer/laptop	1	2	98	99
C.19 More than 5 books	1	2	98	99

C.20	What is the most often used source of **drinking** water in this residence? **ONE MENTION ONLY.**	Piped – Internal	1
		Piped – Yard tap	2
		Water – Carrier/tanker	3
		Piped – Public Tap/Kiosk (free)	4
		Piped – Public Tap/Kiosk (paid for)	5
		Borehole	6
		Other (SPECIFY):	7

C.21	What type of toilet facility is available for this household? **ONE MENTION ONLY.**	Flush toilet in dwelling	7
		Flush toilet on site	8
		Flush toilet off site (shared/communal)	9
		Improved pit latrine with ventilation (VIP)	2
		Other pit latrine	3
		Bucket toilet	4
		Chemical toilet	5
		None	6

D. Household Income, Expenditures and Debt

INTERVIEWER READ OUT: I would like to ask you a few questions about how families get and spend money.

				GO TO:
D.1 (D.4 CAPS 2005)	➢ How much money does this household receive in a typical month from everybody (including all earnings, pensions, grants and so on)? **INTERVIEWER: PROBE RESPONDENT FOR BEST GUESS.**	Rand		**D.3**
		Refused	99998	**D.2**
		Don't know	99999	**D.2**
➢	**INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT KNOW OR WILL NOT PROVIDE A SPECIFIC INCOME AMOUNT, SHOW THEM THE INCOME CARD AND ASK THE FOLLOWING:**			
D.2 (D.5 CAPS 2005)	Referring to the categories on the card, tell me the number on the card that shows how much money does this household receives in a typical month (including all earnings, pensions, grants and so on)? ➢ **ONLY ANSWER IF DON'T KNOW OR REFUSED IN D.1.**	No income	99995	
		R1 - R1 00	01	
		R101 - R150	02	
		R151 - R200	03	
		R201 - R300	04	
		R301 - R400	05	
		R401 - R500	06	
		R501 - R600	07	
		R601 - R800	08	
		R801 - R1 000	09	
		R1 001 - R1 250	10	
		R1 251 - R1 500	11	
		R1 501 - R1 750	12	
		R1 751 - R2 000	13	
		R2 001 - R2 500	14	
		R2 501 - R3 000	15	
		R3 001 - R4 000	16	
		R4 001 - R5 000	17	
		R5 001 - R6 000	18	
		R6 001 - R8 000	19	
		R8 001 - R10 000	20	
		R10 001 - R12 000	21	
		R12 001 – R14 000	22	
		R14 001 – R16 000	23	
		R16 001 – R18 000	24	
		R18 001 – R20 000	25	
		R20 001 – R22 500	26	
		R22 501 – R25 000	27	
		R25 001 – R30 000	28	
		R30 000 and over	29	
		Refused	99998	
		Don't know	99999	

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D.5 (D.8 CAPS 2005)	How important are contributions of money and goods from people outside the household in helping this household get by from month to month?	Not at all important	1	
		Somewhat important	2	
		Very important	3	
		Don't know	99999	

| D.6
(D.9 CAPS 2005) | During the last thirty days, for how many days did your household not have enough to eat? | Number of Days | | |
| | | Don't know | 99999 | |

D.7 (D.28 CAPS 2005)	How would you compare this household's current financial situation to the situation of other households in this same neighbourhood? Is current the situation much better, slightly better, about the same, slightly worse, or much worse than the situation of others in this area?	Much better than others	1
		Slightly better than others	2
		About the same as others	3
		Slightly worse than others	4
		Much worse than others	5
		Refused	99998
		Don't know	99999

D.8	Please tell me how much you spent on the following items last month:	Average monthly expenditure 99999=Don't know	
D.8.1	Food	
D.8.2	Services (electricity, lighting, water)	
D.8.3	Savings (stokvels, burial society, insurance, saving schemes)	
D.8.4	Transport (to school, work, clinic, etc.)	
D.8.5	Health care (chemist, herbalist, clinic visits etc.)	
D.8.6	Education (school fees, uniforms, materials etc.)	
D.8.7	Rent / accommodation	
D.8.8	Other (entertainment, money to family members etc.): Specify?	

Debt

People sometimes borrow money or buy things on credit. They then have to pay this debt back. Some people find this difficult. We would like to ask you about any debt you may have				Go to:
K.1.1	Do you owe money to a bank?	Yes	1	
		No	2	K.2.1
		Refused	98	
K.1.2	What is this debt for?	A house	1	
		A car	2	
		A loan for education	3	
		A loan for everyday expenses	4	
		Other (specify)		
K.1.3	How much do you pay back each month?			
K.2.1	Do you owe money to a clothing shop?	Yes	1	
		No	2	K.3.1
		Refused	98	
K.2.2	How much do you pay back each month?			
K.3.1	Do you owe money to a furniture shop?	Yes	1	
		No	2	K.4.1
		Refused	98	
K.3.2	How much do you pay back each month?			

K.4.1	Do you owe money to any other shop (specify)	Yes	1	
		No	2	**K.5.1**
		Refused	98	
K.4.2	How much do you pay back each month?			
K.5.1	Do you owe money to a money lender?	Yes	1	
		No	2	**K6**
		Refused	98	
K.5.2	What is this debt for?	A house	1	
		A car	2	
		A loan for education	3	
		A loan for everyday expenses	4	
		Other (specify) ………………………		
K.5.3	How much do you pay back each month?			

Savings

	We would now like to ask you some questions about savings			Go To
K6	Do you save in a gooi-gooi?	Yes	1	
		No	2	K8
K7	If yes, how much money do you save each month (on average)?	Amount	R	
K8	Do you save in a burial society?	Yes	1	
		No	2	K9
K8 a	If yes, how much money do you save each month (on average)?	Amount	R	
K9	Do you have a bank account?	Yes	1	
		No	2	X1
K1 0	Do you use your bank account to save money (or do you spend all the money you put in it)? **Interviewer: prompt if necessary**	I spend all the money I put in my bank account	1	K12
		I save some of the money I put in my bank account and I spend the rest	2	
		I save all the money I put in my bank account	3	
K1 1	How much do you save each month on average in your bank account?	R		

C4	What is the most important problem facing the country that the government should address? And the second most important?		1st mention	2nd mention
		Job Creation/unemployment	1	1
		Crime	2	2
		Housing	3	3
		Education	4	4
(C.3 CAS 2005)		HIV/AIDS	5	5
		Health Care	6	6
		Poverty	7	7
		Domestic violence	8	8
		Other (specify)	9	9
		Don't know	99	99

1. Who or which organisation do you think best represents your needs and interests in Khayelitsha?

2. If you think about the following organisations/structures, how would you grade them in terms of representing the needs/interests of your community in government?

	1 (Poor)	2(Moderate)	3(Good)	4(Excellent)
NGOs, for example Philani				
CBO, for example Umgalelo				
Khayelitsha Community Development Forum				
Sanco				
Political party				
Religious leader				

3. Please name the two most important qualities/characteristics of persons or organisations that represent you interests / needs best when it comes to cooperation with government.

*
*

C.5 (A.33.1-A.33.5 KS 2004)	We now want to ask you some personal questions. If you feel uncomfortable answering these questions, we can move on to the next section.					
C.5	IN THE PAST YEAR HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU:	Never	Hardly ever	Some-times	Often	All the time
C5.1	Felt that problems are piling up so high that you cannot overcome them?	1	2	3	4	5
C5.2	Felt that you cannot stop feeling very sad and depressed – even with help from your friends or family?	1	2	3	4	5
C5.3	Felt lonely?	1	2	3	4	5
C5.4	Felt nervous or stressed?	1	2	3	4	5
C5.5	Been so worried or anxious that you have felt tired, worn out or exhausted [Cape Area Study = d19]	1	2	3	4	5

		We have spoken about our society, health, values, and many other things. These questions are about life and death. I know that it is sometimes difficult to talk about this. But please try to answer these questions for me.			
I.9	When you die, do you want your body to be: **(Interviewer: prompt if necessary)**	Cremated		1	Go to **J1**
		Buried in an urban grave-yard		2	Go to **J1**
		Buried in a rural area		3	
		I don't care – whatever is convenient for my family		4	Go to **J1**
		Other (specify)			Go to **J1**
I.10	Why do you want to be buried in a rural area? (specify) **(Do not prompt)**	To be with my ancestors		1	
		Other (specify) _____		2	
J.1	Have you ever performed a ritual for your ancestors?		Yes	1	
			No	2	
			Refused	98	
J.2	Did you attend an initiation school?		Yes	1	
			No	2	
			Refused	98	
J.3	Do you think African children today should attend initiation school?		Yes	1	
			No	2	
			Refused	98	

Social Support

(selected questions from the Medical Outcomes Survey [FROM 2004] http://www.rand.org/health/surveys/mos.descrip.html). Also used in the Virginia Commonwealth University and Rhodes University Eastern Cape Pilot Survey
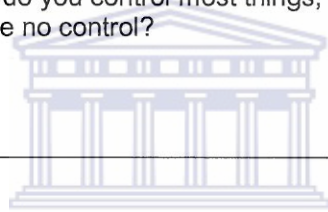
H.2 (C.55 KS 2004/ARV 2004)	HOW OFTEN IS THE FOLLOWING KIND OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO YOU? • In each case, indicate who "someone" is	None of the time	A little of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
H.2.1	Someone who will listen to you when you need to talk	1	2	3	4	5
H.2.2	Someone to share your most private worries and fears with	1	2	3	4	5
H.2.3	Someone who understands your problems	1	2	3	4	5
H.2.4	Someone to help you if you were confined to bed	1	2	3	4	5
H.2.5	Someone to take you to the doctor if you needed it	1	2	3	4	5
H.2.6	Someone to prepare your meals if you were unable to do it yourself	1	2	3	4	5
H.2.7	Someone to help with daily chores if you were sick	1	2	3	4	5
H.2.8	Someone who shows you love and affection	1	2	3	4	5
	Someone to have a good time with	1	2	3	4	5

H.3 (C.60 KS 2004; C.60 ARV 2004)	Do you belong to a religious group? (Give name of church) Are you a leader at church?					
H.4 (C.61 KS 2004; C.61 ARV 2004)	How often do you attend religious meetings or services?	Never	1	A few times a year	4	
		Once a month	2	Twice a month	5	
		Once a week	3	More than once a week	6	
		Other (explain)				
H.5 (C.62 KS 2004; C.62 ARV 2004)	Do you belong to one or more community organisations? **Interviewer: This includes participation in any organisation which has a presence in the community (it could be a street committee, a branch of a political party, etc).**			Yes	1	
				No	2	
H.6 (C.63 KS 2004; C.63 ARV 2004)	How often do you attend meetings of community organisations?	Never	1	A few times a year	4	
		Once a month	2	Twice a month	5	
		Once a week	3	More than once a week	6	
		Other (explain)				

(J.4.1-J.4.5 CAS 2005)

I am going to read a list of things that some people believe and other people do not believe. Do you believe each of these, or not, or are you not sure? (J.4.1-3 are from the USA Gallup poll)	Believe	Not sure/ don't know	Do not believe
J.4.1	Do you believe that ghosts or the spirits of dead people can come back?	1	2	3
J.4.2	Do you believe in witches?	1	2	3
J.4.3	Do you believe that there are some African illnesses that can only be cured by traditional healers:	1	2	3
J.4.4	Do you believe that traditional healers can cure AIDS?	1	2	3
J.4.5	Do you believe in the tokoloshe?	1	2	3
J.4.6	Do you believe that black cats bring bad luck?	1	2	3
J.4.7	Do you believe that the spirits of your ancestors care what you do?	1	2	3

A few questions about the way you feel about your life in general:

H.7 (G.27 CAPS 2005)	Taking all things together, are you: very happy, happy, a little happy or not happy?	Very happy	1
		Happy	2
		A little happy	3
		Not happy	4
		Don't know	9
H.8 (G.28 CAPS 2005)	How much control do you think that you have over what happens in your life? Are you totally in control, do you control most things, do you have little control or do you have no control?	Totally in control	1
		Control most things	2
		Have little control	3
		Have no control	4
		Don't know	9

Response Codes for Household Questionnaire

B5: Why not in household	
01	Deceased
02	Stayed at old residence
03	Went to prison
04	Went to hospital or nursing home
05	Moved out because of a job
06	Moved out to go to university or tehnikon
07	Moved out to go to school
08	Moved out because of dispute or break-up of relationship
09	Moved out to get married or live with partner
10	Moved out to look for work
11	Moved abroad
12	Other
99	Don't know

B11, B12. Relationships	
01	Self
02	Wife / husband / partner
03	Biological son or daughter
04	Stepson / stepdaughter
05	Son-in-law / daughter-in-law
06	Grandchild
07	Brother / sister
08	Brother in-law / sister-in-law
09	Step brother / step sister
10	Half brother / half sister
11	Biological father / mother
12	Father-in-law / mother-in-law
15	Nephew / niece
16	Cousin
17	Great-grandchild
19	Household help
20	Step-father / step-mother
21	Friend
22	Other unrelated
24	Adoptive or foster parent
25	Father's sister
26	Father's brother
27	Mother's sister
28	Mother's brother
29	Father's father / mother
30	Mother's father / mother
31	Other kin on father's side
32	Other kin on mother's side
33	Adoptive child
34	Foster child
99	Don't know

B.33, B.35 Highest Schooling Level	
95	No schooling/Grade 0/Little sub-A
01	Grade 1/Sub A
02	Grade 2/Sub B
03	Grade 3/Standard 1
04	Grade 4/Standard 2
05	Grade 5/Standard 3
06	Grade 6/Standard 4
07	Grade 7/Standard 5
08	Grade 8/Standard 6
09	Grade 9/Standard 7
10	Grade 10/Standard 8
11	Grade 11/Standard 9
12	Grade 12/Standard10/Matric
20	Undergraduate Diploma/Certificate from a Technikon with Grade12/Std 10*
21	Undergraduate Diploma/Certificate from a University with Grade12/Std 10*
22	Undergraduate degree from a Technikon
23	Undergraduate degree from a University
24	Postgraduate degree or diploma
26	Diploma/Cert that requires matric, not from Univ or Tech
27	Diploma/Cert that does not require matric, not from Univ or Tech
25	Other (Specify):
99	Don't know

B17,B18,B19. Health Conditions	
01	Tuberculosis
02	Other respiratory problems (asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia)
03	Physically handicapped
04	Problems with sight, hearing or speech
05	Mental problem
06	HIV/AIDS
07	Other sexually transmitted disease
08	Diabetes
09	Heart disease
10	Cancer
11	Epilepsy / fits
19	Other (Specify)

B.36 Reason not in school	
01	Working
02	Passed matric, didn't want to study further
03	Could not afford
04	Poor health or disability
05	Married
06	Pregnant, had a baby
07	Needed to care for sick relative
08	Expelled
09	School is not important
10	Failed exams
11	Other (Specify)